





THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE HISTORY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FROM 1763 TO 1876
BY HENRY REEVE

PROFESSOR AMBERG AT THE AGE OF 70
(Photo by Stelisky)





THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY:

His Life and Adventures.

Imperial 16mo, cloth, 6s. Boys' Edition,
crown 8vo, cloth gilt, gilt edges, 5s.

THE STORY OF HUNGARY.

Fully Illustrated. Large crown 8vo, cloth,
5s. (THE STORY OF THE NATIONS
SERIES.)

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN.

THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

THE MEMOIRS OF
ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

VOLUME I



LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE · 1904

(All rights reserved.)

DS8
V25A2
1904
v.1

Preface

AUTHORS of Autobiographies are much exposed to fall into self-glorification. If I nevertheless have undertaken to write the following pages, I have done so because of the unexpectedly favourable criticism which the first two chapters of my book—*Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry, Written by Himself*—met with in England and in America. In this book I tried to lay before the public an account of such travels and wanderings of mine as were not comprised in my first book on Central Asia, and in addition I thought it advisable to give a few outlines of my juvenile adventures and struggles. Strange to say it was the narrative of the latter which elicited the particular interest of my readers, as I noticed from the many letters I received from the most distant parts of Europe and America.

Well, I said to myself, if such short sketches of my curious career have evoked this interest on the part of my readers, what will be the impression if I draw the picture of my whole life and of all the

vicissitudes I went through from my childhood to my present old age? This is the main reason of the issue of the present volumes. Keeping in mind the Oriental proverb, "To speak of his own self is the business of the Shaitan," I have reluctantly touched upon many topics connected with my personality, but events are mostly inseparable from actors, and besides I have found encouragement in recalling the appreciation Britons and Americans are habitually ready to accord to the career of self-made men.

There are besides other motives which have served as incentives to these pages. The various stages of my life have been passed in various countries and societies, and a personal record of men and events dating from half a century back may not be without interest to the present generation. Unchecked by conventional modesty and false shame, I have related all I went through in plain and unadorned words, and if I have not concealed facts relating to my very humble origin and to the mistakes I committed, neither have I thought it necessary to leave unmentioned the result of my labours and the honours entailed by them. It is now forty years ago since I had first the honour of coming before the British public, and my desire to be thoroughly known by it may be pardoned.

A. VAMBÉRY.

Contents



CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
MY ANTECEDENTS AND INFANCY	I

CHAPTER II.

JUVENILE STRUGGLES	33
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIVATE TUTOR	69
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

MY FIRST JOURNEY TO THE EAST	105
--	-----

CHAPTER V.

MY SECOND JOURNEY TO THE EAST	161
---	-----

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN TO EUROPE	203
--------------------------------	-----

Illustrations



PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY . *Frontispiece*

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR *Facing page 35*

My Antecedents and Infancy

VOL. 1.

2

CHAPTER I

MY ANTECEDENTS AND INFANCY

“*COGITO ergo sum!*” Yes, I am here, but the date of my birth I cannot positively state, as I have no means of ascertaining it. I had the problematic good fortune to be born of Jewish parents, and as at that time the Jews in Hungary were not compelled by law to be regularly registered, and the authorities were satisfied with such scanty information as the parish documents afforded, I have not been able to get any official certificate as to the date of my birth. My mother told me that I was born shortly before my father's death on St. Joseph's Day, and as my father was one of the last victims of the cholera which began to scourge the land in 1830, I cannot be far wrong in giving the year of my birth as 1831 or 1832.

Genealogy not being one of my favourite subjects, I will not trouble the reader with a detailed account of my pedigree. As far as I know, my great-great-grandfather came from the worthy little town of Bamberg, and when the Emperor Joseph II. com-

manded his Jewish subjects to take a surname, my grandfather, who was born in Hungary, took the name of the town of his ancestors, and was entered as Bamberger. As time went on the "B" was changed into "W," and my father wrote his name as Wamberger, although he made but little use of this registered name, for in those days the Orthodox Jews followed the Oriental custom, according to which the father's name is the one generally used, and the family name is merely of official importance. My father was not only a devout Jew, but also a distinguished Talmudist who often spent whole days and nights in study, without troubling himself much about mundane affairs. Religious zeal and love of learning are the two powerful levers of this especially Jewish erudition, and its disciples who regard intellectual and religious attainments as one and the same thing necessarily live in a visionary world into which none but theologians of Asiatic creeds can penetrate, and which has long since been closed to Christian divines, whose doctrines are so permeated with scepticism. According to my mother's saying, my father must have caught this fever of fanatical enthusiasm in his early youth. In ordinary life he was diffident and awkward, and when he came to woo her in her father's house at Lundenburg, in Moravia, his appearance had caused much secret amusement to the girls of the Malavan family. But my mother, a beautiful girl of eighteen, had soon taken a liking to the bashful

young scholar, who had bright eyes and pleasant features to recommend him. She had been brought up by a stepmother, and from her earliest youth had tasted many a time from the bitter cup of life. She hoped to find happiness at the side of an earnest and religious-minded man, and so easily yielded to the persuasions of her Orthodox father, and left her home and her birthplace to follow the Talmudist, of whom as yet she knew but little, into Hungary to the town of St. Georghen, in the Presburger county, where my father, as a native of the place, hoped to get the appointment of under-rabbi.

But, as is only too well known, theologians of all times and religions have always evinced an unconquerable hatred, jealousy, and bitterness towards men of their own profession, and the darts thrown by the religious zealot are known to be far more venomous than those of the hunter after worldly treasures. The Talmudists of St. Georghen, whose number must of necessity have been very limited, were not exempt from this vice, and as my father's quiet, modest nature could not cope with his antagonists, the hope of preferment vanished more and more into the background, and the darkened horizon of the poor man's future was now only illumined by the steady glimmer of his enthusiasm for his studies. While musing and speculating upon the intricacies of the Mishna and Gemara, the good man quite forgot that the modest dowry which my

mother had brought with her could not last for ever, and was not inexhaustible like the bottomless discussions and arguments of his favourite study, and that in order to live one had to look beyond the world of books into the busy market-place of everyday life. Soon my mother had to rouse him to the realisation of this cruel necessity. She was fully aware of the gravity of the situation, and all the ways and means by which the clever but young and inexperienced woman had tried to ward off the evil day proved fruitless. At one time she advised her husband to commence a fruit and corn business, then they tried to keep a public-house, but when everything failed the pious Talmudist was forced to become a hawker, and buying the agricultural products from the farmers in the neighbouring villages to try to sell them again at a small profit. What terrible martyrdom this must have been to the inspired Talmudist—to leave his study and his books and to go hawking among the raw Slavonic peasants of the neighbourhood! What self-sacrifice, to leave the multi-coloured, visionary fields of “Halacha” and “Hagada,” and to descend to the vulgar occupation of bargaining and bartering for a sack of beans or peas, a sheep- or a goat-skin. My mother often recalled it with tears in her eyes, for she was deeply attached to my father. She shared his enthusiasm for study, she sympathised in his mental struggles, but the voice of hunger is peremptory; she encouraged and helped

him, and my poor father hardly ever lost his patience. One wet day in autumn, having bought a cowhide, yet damp, from a butcher at Ratzersdorf, he flung it over his shoulder on the top of a heavy load he was carrying. Thus laden he reached home late in the evening, wet through and tired out after wading through the deep mud. My mother awaited him with the frugal evening meal, but he, throwing down his load on the floor, went straight into his little study, where he buried himself in his books; and when my mother, tired of waiting, came to look for him, she found him as deep in his studies as if he had been sitting there the whole day. A man of such habits and tendencies was not likely to succeed in looking after the temporary needs of his family. It is therefore not surprising that my mother, with her practical common sense, at last came to the conclusion that it would be best to leave her husband to his books, and herself to look after the support of the family. And so my mother became a business woman. She went out into the world while my father sat at home in his study and took care of the house. A sad change of places, which pleased my mother only in so far as, being a pious Jewess, she thought she was doing a work well pleasing to God. But the interests of the family suffered greatly, for as she was inexperienced in the struggle for existence, our poverty increased rapidly, and when the destroying angel, the cholera, at that time ravaging Europe, swept

over North-West Hungary also, and snatched away my father, my mother, at the age of twenty-two, was left a widow with two children in the greatest distress.

This terrible blow, the misery of it, and the feeling of loneliness in a strange land filled the young, energetic woman with unwonted activity. She took a young companion from Lundenburg into the house to look after the children, in order that she might devote herself more entirely to her business. She laboured without interruption, and in the second year of her widowhood she had the satisfaction of seeing her cellar stocked with good wine, her storehouse full of corn, and her inn one of the most frequented in the little town of St. Georghen. She was getting on very well indeed, but in order to extend her business she thought a man's support was necessary, so she married again. Her husband was a young man of her own age, who came from Duna Szerdahely, and was now to be the father of the orphans (*i.e.*, my sister and myself) and my mother's protector and companion. Whether my mother was induced to take this step under the pretext used by all young widows, or whether she really needed assistance, I cannot and dare not investigate. One thing is certain, she did not improve her condition, for Mr. Fleischmann, as her second husband was called, was a kind-hearted, easy-going man, but by no means industrious or enterprising. He helped to spend the money, but

not to make it. And when, after the first year, my mother upbraided him for his idleness, he declared that here, among strangers, he should never get on, but if my mother would go with him to his native town he was sure that there, surrounded by his relatives and friends, he should be far better able to attend to his duties as head of the family.

And so it came about that my mother, and we with her, left St. Georghen and settled at Duna Szerdahely, from which place I date my intellectual awakening, for I look upon this town, and not the one where I first beheld the light, as my real birth-place. I must at that time have been about three years old, and my recollections of my first home are very vague indeed. But I clearly remember one scene. I was playing about under the big oblong table of the public room, while on the knobs round about the table small miniature loaves were strung together, which I ate one after the other, for even then I was known for my large appetite. These gastric feats were interrupted by the entrance of several guests, who playfully blew the froth of their beer glasses down upon me. It gave me a fright which I remember to this day. Other incidents of my infancy have also left a vague impression upon my mind. Thus, for instance, I remember quite distinctly the morning when I got up with a pain in my foot, and began to limp. Coxalgia had then taken hold of me, and I began to go lame with my

left leg, an affliction for which no cure could be found, as will be further related in the course of this narrative. I can slightly remember our move, which was effected on a large waggon, but I have no distinct recollection of anything during the first two or three years in Duna Szerdahely, my adopted native town.

Where other children find roses on their path, and the blue sky of golden youth is for ever smiling down upon them, I found nothing but thorns, privation, and misery. It soon became evident that our stepfather, as already mentioned, although a good-hearted man, possessed none of those qualities which everybody needs in the struggle of life; how much more, then, a man who has a whole family dependent upon him! The small capital which my mother had brought with her from St. Georghen soon dwindled away. Poverty entered the house and peace departed, and the children had to suffer much through the mother's ever-increasing despondency. The public-house had to be given up, and we tried a fresh departure, viz., the sale of leeches. This was a sort of family trade of the Fleischmanns in Duna Szerdahely, or rather a miserable sort of hawker's business. The brothers Fleischmann bought from the peasants the leeches found in abundance in the neighbouring swamps, and after sorting them they sold them to the apothecaries of Northern Hungary.

At a very early age I was initiated into the details of the trade. The leeches had to be sorted

according to size, and put in linen bags about 40 centimeters long ; they were bathed twice in the twenty-four hours, an operation at which the children assisted, but I had great difficulty in overcoming a feeling of repugnance when I had to separate the wretched creatures from the slimy substance. It happened sometimes that the leeches escaped in the night from the bag, if it had not been securely enough fastened, and crawled about in the room which served us all as bedroom. As we children had to sleep on the floor, for lack of a bedstead, sometimes the one, sometimes the other of us would wake with a sudden fright, for the hungry animals used to get hold of our toes, or some other member, and quietly begin to suck. Then, of course, there was a general commotion ; the creatures had to be searched for with a light, and replaced in the bag. The tragi-comedy of these nocturnal scenes highly amused us children.

The weal and the woe of the family, which meanwhile had increased from four to six and seven, depended entirely upon the demand for, and the price of, leeches. In Hungary, bleeding was still in fashion, but as medical science in its steady growth began to prohibit all methods for reducing the blood, the demand for leeches necessarily became less ; and as their value decreased, the poverty in our home increased. The rosy days of childhood were for me days of suffering and privation and want. Sometimes the pinch of poverty was terrible

to bear, especially when my stepfather was on one of his hawking tours, which often took weeks. Then, when the money he had left behind had come to an end, we had to live on black bread, potatoes cooked in various ways, beans, peas, and lentils. Coffee and milk were luxuries, and meat we only had in very small portions on Saturdays and feast-days. Many a time we had not even bread, and I have a lively recollection of the queer manner in which we managed to get hold of some. Our house, a poor, dilapidated little place on a level with the ground, stood at the extreme end of the little town, on the borders of a willow-grove, and close to the large piece of waste ground where wandering gipsies used to set up their black tents. Thus at a very early age I became interested in gipsy life. I distinctly remember the camp of these brown children of the East. Some of them were almost naked, others dressed in rags, but never failed to display large silver buttons on their tattered garments. My first impressions of nomadic life I received through these people. They belonged to the tribe known in Hungary as the "Wallachian Gipsies," a remarkable people, wilder and more lawless than the half-civilised tribes. They lived by stealing, fortune-telling, and tinkering, and were so hardened that in the bitterest weather they would camp in the open. The next morning the children would be packed into a kind of feather-bed, which was slung over the horse's head, forming bags on

either side ; and so the journey was resumed, the mother generally sitting on the horse, the bigger boys and the men going on foot.

The road leading to the villages situated on the island Schütt, between Duna Szerdahely and Komorn, went past our house, and as on Fridays all the beggars of the neighbourhood were allowed to beg for alms of any description in the market-places, mendicants of all ages and both sexes might be seen on such days making their way past our house towards those places. The picture of the horrible, motley caravan of feigned and real cripples, blind, dumb, and lame folks, of lepers and paralytics, in their dirty, tattered garments, fills me with dismay even now. The phantoms of the past are ever before my eyes. And it was with these miserable, offensive creatures that I had to barter on Friday afternoons for the bread and other victuals they had collected during the day—money seldom came their way—in exchange for one or two bottles of brandy. It was indeed a bitter piece of bread, grudgingly bestowed by dirty, sickly hands. Nevertheless, it was welcome food to us in our starving condition. In my earliest youth I made the acquaintance of that terrible spectre, hunger, and even in subsequent stages of my life he has often been my companion ; my battles with this monster were certainly not amongst the lightest I have had to fight.

In spite of everything I grew up strong and healthy, and, with the exception of one illness when

I was three years old—and of which I have some remembrance, because my mother, in obedience to a superstition prevalent in Hungary, sold me for a few kreuzer to another woman, in the hope that God would ward off the impending danger, and be moved to clemency towards the possibly sinless new mother—I have not known a day's illness in the whole of my life. From early spring till late autumn I went about generally barefooted and scantily clothed. In the summer I slept by preference in the yard, under the overhanging roof of our house, instead of in the close bedroom, and I slept so soundly that not even a thunderstorm roused me until my naked feet were soaking wet with the pouring rain. My rosy, chubby cheeks, my bright, black eyes, and my curly hair found favour with the women folk; and whenever I came in the market-place the farmers' wives petted and fondled me, and always made the same remark, "Pity the little Jew is crooked." Personally, I did not trouble much about this bodily defect. With my crutch tucked under the left arm, I went about quite happily, and even tried to run races with my companions. But when I had to give up the race on account of my lame leg, and came home crying, my mother used to comfort me with the words: "My child, thou wilt do better than any of thy companions, but thou must have patience and perseverance."

My bodily affliction, however, was a grievous

thorn in my mother's eye. Her vanity was wounded, and her one aim and object was to rid me of the evil. What has she not done to effect this? The ways and means by which she endeavoured to cure me pass all description. The most out-of-the-way remedies and magic cures were resorted to. I was not only bathed in various kinds of herbs, rubbed with all possible and imaginable salves and greases, but the strangest magic charms were tried at my expense. And when everything failed I was placed at midnight at the crossing of the road, to fall under the spell of passing old gipsy women. But worst of all were the experiments of miracle-mongers or quacks. At one time one such appeared in the shape of a Catholic priest, in the village of Rudnó, in North Hungary, and no sooner had my mother heard of him than she left the family in charge of her relatives, and undertook the long, laborious journey to find him. As there were no railways, we travelled on foot, a charitable farmer sometimes giving us a lift on his loaded cart. And so we trudged on for many weary days, until the wretched little village was reached. My poor destitute mother had to slip a fee into the hand of the landlady of this clerical charlatan before we could be admitted, but the gentleman of the black cowl did not waste many words with his patients. He casually looked at my crooked leg, wrote a prescription—the apothecary being partner in this holy business—and I was dismissed with the promise

of a speedy recovery. Even to this day I marvel how my mother, a thoroughly clever, capable woman—although she could neither read nor write—was so desperately entangled in the meshes of superstition, and that no amount of disillusion could save her from falling into the same error again.

The uselessness of the Rudnó prescription was still fresh in our minds, when the fame of a new Wonder-doctor in the village of Gròb, in the Neutraer county, was spread abroad, and my mother at once set out again. The miraculous cure-worker this time was not a priest, but an ordinary, ignorant peasant who could neither read nor write. We went to see him at his farm, and when he heard that there was good wine to be had in Duna Szerdahely, he at once offered to go home with us to effect the cure. A cure indeed! So barbarously cruel and drastic was the remedy, that no man with any proper feeling would have subjected an animal to it. For five days running my leg had to be held over hot vapours every morning for a certain length of time to soften the sinews and fibres, as the peasant-doctor explained. Then on the sixth day the great operation took place. My mother was sent out of the house, and I was made to lie down on the floor, two strong gipsies acting as assistants, holding me tight, the one by the shoulders, the other by the feet. Then the peasant threw himself with all his weight upon the crippled knee, which formed almost a right angle. A terrible crash—and I knew

no more. When I came to myself again, my poor weeping mother was on her knees beside me. She caressed me and gave me something to drink. The injured leg was now put between rough wooden splints and tightly bandaged. Curative measures of this kind were in vogue in Hungary in 1836, and they are so still, not only in Hungary, but in other countries of civilised Europe! Of course the operation was without success. When the splints were removed, and I could go about again, the old mischief returned, the crutch had again to be resorted to, and I have gone through life limping, not altogether to my disadvantage, as the subsequent pages will show.

Apart from this bodily defect I enjoyed good health as a child, notwithstanding the chary and very primitive nourishment I received, and in spite of the many miseries to which I was exposed on account of insufficient clothing. Sometimes I was inclined to envy the better lot of my schoolfellows and companions, and was unhappy in consequence, but this early hardening process was the very best training I could have had for my later career. The sufferings and privations I had later to bear as Mohammedan mendicant friar seemed to me not much harder nor more trying than what I had to go through in my youth.

This much as regards my physical bringing up. As for my intellectual accomplishments, the reader must first be made acquainted with the literary

demands which, to the Orthodox Jew of those days, were inseparable from a righteous and God-fearing life. Just as the Mohammedan understands by learning merely religious knowledge, by erudition merely a thorough acquaintance with the Koran and ritualistic observances, and sees the ideal of education only in theological accomplishments, so also the Jew regards a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures as the only essential thing, and the study of the Talmud is his chief accomplishment. Young lads, therefore, are first of all taught to read Hebrew, and when they have become familiar with the letters of the foreign tongue, they proceed to translate the Hebrew text according to a very primitive method. They are told a few words here and there, and have to make out the sense as best they can. Then, as a third stage, they come to the grammar, the actual study of the language. Schools in general were conducted much on the same primitive principle. Any Jew with a sufficient knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was authorised to set up an educational establishment, and the success of the school depended in most cases upon the greatest number of successful pupils and on the smallness of the school fees. The pedagogic talent of the teacher also carried some weight, *i.e.*, whether he made much or little use of the birch rod ; for the schools where stripes and swollen cheeks were not so frequent were naturally favoured by soft-hearted mothers. I received my elementary education in a

third-rate school ; but an inborn brightness of intellect and good memory enabled me soon to rise above my schoolfellows, and I was qualified to enter the best-known school of the place at a much reduced fee. I learned with pleasure and facility, and had a special liking for learning by heart. I had but to read a Hebrew text two or three times to be able to say it off by heart without much prompting. The teacher had noticed this, and of course my mother knew it, for she used to say, "His father was a great scholar, he is bound to have plenty of brains."

Nevertheless she kept me rigorously at my lessons, and when I went to bed I had to put my books, often big folios, under my pillow, "for," said my mother, "knowledge will get into thine head over night, right through the bolster," which I believed literally. Yes, my mother was a remarkable woman. Blind superstition and rare common sense alternated in her. She had a most extraordinary energy, and was a type of the Jewess of the Middle Ages, full of ancient principles and maxims, sometimes showing themselves in a tenacious clinging to the old faith, sometimes conforming to existing circumstances. If there was a thunderstorm in the night she would quickly make a light, open the Bible at the Creation story, and exclaim, "Behold, O God, Thou hast created the world, destroy not Thine own handiwork." Her memory was marvellous. She could remember the smallest details of her early childhood, and told

me often what her mother had said to her about the Frenchmen after the battle of Austerlitz. How they overran the country in the neighbourhood of Lundenburg, and how the grenadiers forced their way into the houses, crying for "*Café ! Café, sacré nom de Dieu !*" I think I must have inherited my memory from my mother.

My knowledge up to my eighth year consisted chiefly of the Pentateuch with commentary, the Prophets, and other Biblical stories, besides Hungarian and German, reading and writing. I felt quite at home in the five books of Moses, and in the Prophets I was sufficiently versed to recite and translate long passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Treasssar, and other Holy Scriptures. These accomplishments gave me a certain standing among my schoolfellows, and the teacher used to bring me forward as a kind of specimen of his teaching ; for whenever a father came to the school to introduce his promising offspring, I was called up and examined to prove by my answers the zeal and skill of the teacher.

To be thus gazed at in one's youth has its dangers, for it is apt to make one somewhat vain, and it might easily have grown into self-conceit if my mother's warning words had not from time to time acted like a shower-bath on the fire of my youthful imagination. "Thou art nothing yet, thou knowest nothing yet," said she ; "the son of my first husband must be the first of all the boys."

And what my mother meant by *the first* was not confined to the Jewish schools at Duna Szerdahely. For she intended me to excel not only in Jewish but also in Christian learning. Devout and God-fearing though she was, she seems soon to have come to the conclusion that the study of Thora and Talmud may be all very well to open the gates of Paradise, but that they are of little use to help one on in the world, and that under the altered conditions of the time the disposition which reduced my father to beggary would be of still less use to me. In short, my mother had made up her mind that I was to relinquish the study of Jewish religion and direct my attention to a worldly career, and that the son of the Rabbi and Talmudist was to become a universal scholar. The boldness of this plan can only be fully appreciated by those who have known some of the aspirations of the life, the ways of thinking, and the horrible fanaticism of the Jews of those days.

In my youth the Jewish community of Duna Szerdahely had the reputation of being the most devout, the most zealous congregation of Hungary, in no wise tinged with doctrinal innovations; the most devout of all Europe, in fact, with the exception of a few Russian and Polish communities, celebrated for their Chasidendon, or zeal. It was a piece of pure unalloyed mediæval conceit, with all its wildly fanatical fancies and impossibilities; a pure counterfeit of that religious

life the dark shadow of which in my after life, during my sojourn with the Moslems of Bokhara, has filled me with horror. In this superabundance of religious enthusiasm, in this frightful labyrinth of ritualistic cavilling and grievous superstition, I spent my childhood. Summer and winter, early in the morning and late at night, I never neglected at the first sound of the wooden hammer on the door—to this replaced the bell which calls the Jews to worship—to speed towards the synagogue, where my strong young voice at a very early age was heard above all the worshippers, and stamped me as a boy of marked Divine favour.

I would rather have died of hunger than have taken a mouthful of food which had not been prepared according to the established ritual, or than partake of meat or milk food without observing the necessary interval of six hours, or, worst of all, than incur pollution by contact with that most monstrous of all creatures—the swine! For fear of baring my head I wore my cap right down over my ears, and when some mischievous Christian lads once forcibly took it from me, I trembled all over like an aspen leaf, and imagined that I should straightway be committed to the awful tortures of the Gehenna. In order not to have to say the word *Kreutz* (cross), I always said *Schmeitzer* instead of *Kreutzer*. When I passed a crucifix I always turned my head the other way, and murmured words of disgust, or secretly spat on the

ground. If by chance on Saturday, the day of absolute rest, I found a copper or silver coin on the ground, I pushed it along with my foot (as it was a sin to touch it with my hand), and in holy dread covered it up with dust and dirt, so that I might find it again next day. A religion which has to instruct its confessors in these minutest details, which prescribes how he must eat, drink, walk, stand, sleep, dress, cleanse his body outwardly and inwardly; how to associate with women and how to comport himself during different natural occurrences — such a religion necessarily exercises a profound influence upon the youthful mind, it absorbs him entirely, it captivates his senses and his thoughts. I found exactly the same thing in after years among the Moslem youths of Turkey and Persia. There, as here, faith really manifests itself merely in outward appearances, in a ritual which is observed with the greatest exactitude, and it is therefore not surprising that the young Jew, like the Moslem, when in after years he begins to inquire into things for himself, breaks the fetters and becomes a freethinker. This total revolution of ideas may be explained as the natural result when two such widely different elements come into contact with each other.

The transformation necessarily depends to a great extent upon the natural tendencies of the individual. As long as I attended the Jewish school, and all contact with the Christian world

was prohibited, there could of course be no question of scepticism with me. It was really my mother who gave the initiative; for, as already mentioned, she meant me to have a secular education. Regardless of the harsh criticism of our fellow-believers, she removed me from the Jewish school, and placed me in the elementary school maintained by the Protestant community. Here I was taught from Christian books, attended the catechising, and received such elementary notions of geography and natural history as the extremely primitive school-books then in use in Hungary were able to furnish. The description of the earth was contained in a little book in verse, called "Kis tükör," or "Small Mirror." Natural history was limited to the description of a few animals, and instead of the Hungarian mother-tongue we were initiated into the elements of Latin. It was, to say the best of it, very meagre fare which Christian culture vouchsafed to me, but it was so totally different from my former studies, which dealt only with events that happened thousands of years ago, that even these scanty morsels convinced me of the greater sustaining power and interest of the intellectual food here offered. The intercourse with Christian companions of my own age also made me freer and less prejudiced, for I played with them and made friends, without, however, entering their houses or touching the food and cakes they offered. This, both my mother and I

felt, would be rank apostasy, and would be going a little too far for the only son of the former rabbi! But the ice was broken. True, I had not yet dared to climb over the wall of partition which, on account of my bringing up, separated me from the outer world, but I began to cast furtive glances over to the other side, and when my mother, little by little, made me familiar with the idea of following a secular career and becoming a doctor, the thick clouds of orthodox religious views soon dispersed, the horizon widened, and with ecstasy my childish eye roamed over those distant regions of delight.

I may have been about ten years old then. My plans for the future were made, but the means to carry them out cost my dear mother unspeakable anxiety. The poverty and misery of the family had now reached a climax. My elder sister had already gone to service, and in order that I might not take the bread out of the children's mouths my mother made up her mind, though with a heavy heart, to send me also out of the house. I went as apprentice to a lady tailoress, whose son I instructed in the Hebrew language, in return for which she boarded me and initiated me in the mysteries of sewing together light cotton and linen materials.

The three hours which I spent in the fulfilment of my pedagogic duties were pleasant enough. It flattered my vanity to teach a boy of my own age, but all the more disagreeable was the time which I

had to spend sitting at the round table among my companions and the more advanced pupils in the tailor's trade. Here I had always to bear mocking remarks about my clumsiness ; they were always finding fault with me, and often gave me palpable instruction how to hold my needle and thimble, how not to crush the stuff unnecessarily, and so on. In short, the initiation into the noble art of tailoring was embittered for me to such an extent that after the first month had elapsed I complained to my mother with tears. She realised the mistake she had made, and encouraged me to hold out at least until the winter was past and she should have secured a good appointment for me. It cost me much to consent, but my mother's admonitions and the consciousness that during the bitter winter weather I should at least have a warm room and tolerable food, whereas I used to have to go all the way to school scantily dressed and with a few warm potatoes in my pocket for breakfast, conquered at last. I became reconciled to my disagreeable lot, until with the awakening of the spring the hope of improving my condition also awoke in me, and glimmers of future possibilities rose before my mind's eye.

I had now reached my eleventh year, and made up my mind to leave not only my home, but also the town in which my mother, the only being who cared for me, lived.

To set out into the world at eleven years of age,

in poverty and misery, with a crutch as companion, away from a mother's loving sympathy, henceforth to wander among strangers, and to be subject to their cold gaze, surely this is a cruel trial and hard to bear for a young, sensitive child. The thought of it frightened me; it weighed me down and forced tears from my eyes—tears which flowed the more abundantly when I saw by my mother's red eyes that she also struggled in vain to keep them down.

But what was to be done? In my dire distress and utter helplessness there seemed no other way open to reach that goal to which my natural propensities appeared to point. My mother encouraged me by saying, "Thou canst not and darest not be an ordinary man. The spirit of thy learned father is in thee. Thou must study and become a doctor; and in order to commence thy studies at the college of St. Georghen, where thy name is known and they will take an interest in thee, thou must earn a few florins first, for I can give thee at best only a change of linen and a suit of clothes for the journey. Yes, my child, thou wilt have much to bear, many hardships to suffer, but mark what I say—we must not mind the trouble. *During the first part of the night we must prepare the bed on which to stretch ourselves during the latter part.*"

Such and similar admonitions and encouraging words were oft repeated. They steeled my courage, and when the appointment of teacher in the house

of the Jewish inn-keeper in the village of Nyék—about two hours' distant from Duna Szerdahely—was offered to me, I accepted it gratefully, and accompanied by my mother, with my crutch and a small bundle on my back, I left the place where I had spent the days of my childhood, to undertake the office which was to furnish me with the means to commence my new career.

Leaving the dusty road for a short cut across the fields, we soon reached Nyék ; and when my mother introduced me to my future principal, the man curiously eyed the insignificant, poorly dressed appearance of the crippled teacher, and during the low, whispered conversation I frequently caught the words, "Too young, too small." A Jew from Szerdahely who knew me happened to be present ; he was kind enough to speak a good word for me by saying, "Never mind the outside ; it's the inside you want. The lad is crammed full of book-learning ; he knows the Prayer-book and the Pentateuch by heart, and if Moritz—that was the name of my future pupil—has but a spark of intelligence in him, he will get on well with him."

Meanwhile the mother and the son had also come in, and while the former gazed with a scarcely concealed smile, as if to say, "He will hardly be a match for my Moritz," the latter glared at me with open dislike, and tearing himself away from his mother he ran into the garden. Such a recep-

tion was not calculated to inspire me with courage, or to paint my future duties as mentor in too rose-coloured a light. I stood there for some time perplexed and broken-hearted; and it was the more difficult to collect myself, as the pain of having to part with my dear mother took all my spirit away. My mother, of course, suffered still more keenly, but not a trace of her inner struggle did she betray; she remained a little while longer with me, and, after warmly embracing me, she took her leave and went with me into the garden. Stepping lightly over the threshold, and looking back only once or twice she swiftly walked home the same way we had come. There I stood, broken-hearted, gazing after my mother as she disappeared in the distance, and overcome with sorrow I sank down, kissed the threshold which her foot had so lately touched, and cried bitter tears of despair over the hardness of my lot.

From this prostrate condition I was suddenly roused by a rough touch on the shoulder, and when I looked round Moritz stood before me. He grinned and said, "Teacher, come to dinner." Obeying this summary call, I entered the room where the family was already seated at table, but I could hardly touch anything, and although some good-natured souls tried to cheer me up, several days passed before I could get used to the new condition of things and properly fulfil such duties as were entrusted to me. For I was not only

teacher, but also house-servant and waiter. Four hours a day I had to instruct "dear Moritz" in writing, reading, and arithmetic, and in the Pentateuch, but early in the morning and late in the evening I had to provide the peasants going to or coming back from the field with wine and brandy, and on Friday afternoons—*i.e.*, before the beginning of the Sabbath—I had to clean the boots of all the family and brush the clothes. How my master came upon the idea of combining these various offices, and making me the "boy of all work," as I had specially been engaged as teacher, is a mystery to me to this day. The Oriental says, "Man loads the ass as much as he can, but not as he (the ass) likes," and this proverb the inn-keeper of Nyék seems to have followed. I performed my duties to the best of my ability; but I soon noticed that whereas the peasants always found the measure of spirituous liquor offered to them too small or too deficient, my pupil found the time of intellectual "dressing" always far too long, and together with his mother complained to his father that I overburdened his mind. If I had not made the mistake of treating my pupil, out of school hours, as my companion and playmate—which seemed so natural because we were of the same age—I might perhaps have impressed him more, but the anomaly of attempting to combine in one person playfellow and teacher revenged itself bitterly upon me; for once when, carried away by

my professional zeal, I upbraided my pupil in rather strong language for his carelessness and stupidity, the rascal, who was much bigger and stronger than I, attacked me, threw me on the floor, gave me a terrible thrashing, and when at last my cries brought his mother on the scene, she had much difficulty in liberating me from the hands of my obstreperous pupil. The "dear boy" received a reprimand for the impropriety of his behaviour, and then things went on as usual. This first failure of my pedagogic capability was followed by many others. In my capacity of waiter and shoe-black I could, to a certain extent, maintain the credit and dignity of my office, but as teacher I was less fortunate, since occasional fits of playfulness and merriment did not agree with the gravity of my position as mentor. I soon wearied of my false position, and counted myself fortunate indeed when the six months were over and I could return to Szerdahely with my earnings—*eight florins* (sixteen shillings)—in my pocket.

Juvenile Struggles





VAMBÉRY IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR.

CHAPTER II

JUVENILE STRUGGLES

My visit to my home was very pleasant ; instead of the cold surroundings I had been used to among strangers, I now met on all sides loving glances from my brothers and sisters, and more especially from my mother, who was proud of the son who had already earned eight bright silver florins. She entertained the greatest hopes as to the result of my future studies and saw me in imagination a country doctor sent for by all the villagers for miles around, handsome fees pouring into his pockets ; in fact, in time a rich man. In one word, the learning displayed by her first husband was always present to her mind, and she eagerly sought in me all the qualities and talents he had possessed.

Had it depended upon my mother I should have started for St. Georghen at once, so as to be able to begin my studies at the Latin school in October as soon as the term commenced. But it was finally decided that I was to stay at home till I had passed from childhood to youth, which takes place in

Jewish families at the age of thirteen and is celebrated by the Feast of Bar Mitzva. So I stayed on, and by degrees got used to the idea of having to leave home for good in a short time.

On the occasion of this Feast of Bar Mitzva the youth who is to enter the ranks of the Orthodox Jews must hold a public discourse on some religious subject, and is admitted to the reading of the Thora in the synagogue, and this symbolical feast, which marks the period at which he leaves childhood behind him and enters youth, is very beautiful. An entertainment is given, to which all his friends of the same age are invited ; in the centre of the table is a large basket made of a kind of baked dough ; this is filled with rods made of pastry, which are distributed at dessert amongst the boys and eaten by them as a sign that they will not be needed for the future.

My mother shed tears of joy at this feast, and during my discourse she imagined she heard my father speaking, and more than once sobbed out, " He is sure to be happy, for his father is praying for him in Paradise."

Strange to say, the whole ceremony made little impression on me. My one desire was to give my mother pleasure and win the admiration of my hearers ; but the religious part of the ceremony did not interest me much, for the influence which the orthodox Jewish faith had on me as a child had diminished through my having read German books.

I was not yet a sceptic, but the fear of overstepping the ritual laws had disappeared. Pork and Christian food no longer seemed poison to me, and with the gradual breaking away of the barriers the sanctuary of my faith was more exposed to the outward attacks made upon it. The first attack shook it without destroying it entirely ; my peace of mind was hardly disturbed ; not, for instance, like Renan's, who, in his twentieth year, rushed into the cell of his friend at midnight, exclaiming, " Oh, I have become a doubter ! "

There is only a short path from exaggerated fanaticism to scepticism. A few days after the feast my knapsack was packed—a very small knapsack, containing a few clothes and some books—and at dusk I left Duna Szerdahely, my crutch under my arm and accompanied by my mother. We hoped to be lucky enough to fall in with some carter taking corn to the weekly market at Presburg who would give us a lift in return for a drink or perhaps even from charity. And we were not mistaken, for we were soon overtaken by some carts, but as they were heavily laden with sacks of corn and the road was bad, we were given seats in two different carts. Although my mother placed me as comfortably as possible among the sacks and begged the man walking beside the cart to look after me, I heard her call to me several times during the night to hold on tightly so as not to fall out. Thus I arrived one fresh autumn morning at

the toll-gate of Presburg, and spent a few days in the town, during which time I did not cease to admire the one-storied houses with their many windows.

We continued our journey to St. Georghen in a cart drawn by four oxen, which we happened to meet on the way. This unostentatious entry into the pretty little town at the foot of one of the spurs of the Carpathians was a fitting beginning for the poverty-stricken existence I was destined to lead there.

Our first visit was to a certain Hirsh-Tirnau, a man noted for his piety and a school friend of my father, who, for the sake of his dead friend, agreed to give me a lodging gratis, though not as willingly as he might have done, for he would much rather have had me study the Talmud than devote myself to Christian studies. As for my lodging, I had permission to spread my mattress of straw in some part of the house at night, and a pillow and blanket were given me by charitable people. But, after all, it was something to have a place to sleep in and a roof over my head, and as soon as my mother was satisfied on this score she went with me to the Director of the Piarists' (Friars) College and entered my name in the list of those who were to study in the first Latin class, or the Parva, as they called it.

Nearly half the money I had earned in Nyék had to be deposited here as entrance fee; with the

other half I had to buy the necessary school-books, and thus I was left without a penny in my pocket, though the question of my board had not yet been touched upon.

It was the business of the Jewish commune to arrange for the daily midday meal for students of the Talmud, and this they did. Charitable, but mostly poor people offered me one meal a week at their table, and on Saturdays I was the official guest of the Jewish commune. The cashier gave me an assignment (or *Bolette*) on one of the richer members. This I had to present on Fridays to the lady of the house, and it was often an unpleasant surprise to her. By this means I got a better meal, which, however, I ate with the bitter feeling that I was an unwelcome guest.

It was a different thing in the case of the other meals; they were given freely, were the result of human kindness, or bestowed in memory of my dead father, and tasted better to me in consequence. This manner of getting my meals had its comical side too, for it often happened that I ate the same dish all the week according as it was the dish of the day at the various houses I visited. But I had at least enough to eat, had even a piece of bread given me sometimes for my supper, and as long as I did not lose the favour of one or other of my patrons I was better off even than at home as far as my board went.

The custom of "boarding," which was willingly

carried out by even the poorest Jews, speaks well for the charity of that community on the one hand, and on the other for their desire to assist and encourage poor students in their pursuit of knowledge. The poor, deserted, and much-oppressed Jew was always glad to share his hardly-earned crust of bread with those who thirsted for knowledge, and it certainly is a splendid trait of real humanity and of a noble endeavour to help in the intellectual struggle.

Being provided with board and lodging, I could now give my undivided attention to my studies in the Parva. My mother, whom it had cost a great effort to part from me, had given me much good advice as to my behaviour when left alone among strangers. She gave me a few pence for pocket-money and a bag of meal, from which I was to make my soup for breakfast in the morning, and after embracing me warmly several times she left me.

This second separation was not as hard as the first one ; habit makes everything easy in time, and when, having made friends with my comrades, I even took delight in going to school, I was able to overcome and forget the adversities of my daily life, and real childlike mirth and gaiety caused the first year of my school life to pass very pleasantly.

There could be no question of over-exertion for me, who had already learnt by heart and translated whole volumes of Hebrew. The elements of Latin grammar, delivered, strange to say, in the Latin

tongue, the rudiments of history, geography, and a little arithmetic were the branches of knowledge with which I was made familiar at the college conducted by the Piarists at St. Georghen. The greatest stress was laid upon the acquirement of the Latin tongue, in which we were obliged to carry on our general conversation after two months' time, and any one heard speaking his mother-tongue at school, whether Hungarian, German, or Slav, was condemned to write out the auxiliary verb "*sum, es, est,*" or some theme ten to twenty times, and to hand it in as a pensum. In order to control this, there was a regular system of spying at school; one of the scholars carried the so-called "*Liber asini*" (donkey's book) hidden on his person, and as *agent provocateur* began to speak in his mother-tongue, and if any one answered him in the same he whipped out the book, exclaiming: "*Inscribas, amice!*" ("Inscribe your name, my friend"); he left the delinquent no peace until he had entered his name, and a suitable punishment was meted out to him the following Saturday. This practice was a remnant of the Middle Ages, and formed a part of the severe *régime* of monastic life in vogue at that time in the Hungarian monasteries. A lively contrast to the spirit of national education which crept in later, it seems strange to us to-day, when the Hungarian language is rightly cultivated as the acknowledged language of the State. Just as severely was Catholic eccle-

siastical discipline kept up in many respects. Lutherans, Calvinists and Jews were obliged to repeat the "*Veni Sancte Spiritus reple tuorum corda fidelium!*" ("Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful"), and also the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary"; we were not allowed to quit the room whilst the lesson in catechism was going on, nor were we permitted to bring meat to school on Fridays; in fact, there was a sort of silent pressure exercised on the scholars in the hope of their embracing the Catholic religion—a pressure exercised without result, it is true, but it had a strange effect on me, who had been an Orthodox Jew, and would not for the world have pronounced the word "cross."

My teacher, a Piarist of twenty, Father Siebenlist by name, a man of prepossessing exterior and great kindness of heart, seemed to take a fancy to me from the beginning. He often pinched my cheek in a friendly way, sometimes gave me an apple, and when, in the depth of winter, I appeared at school with insufficient clothing, he called me up to his room, gave me a warm comforter, a waistcoat, and once even a pair of old trousers; in fact, he did what he could for me in every respect, moved, I am sure, by pure benevolence.

I certainly always did my duty at school as far as was in my power. I was considered the second best scholar, but could not attain to the position of primus, for the simple reason that I studied

one subject less than the others, namely, catechism.

At the examination at the end of the first term I succeeded in gaining the approval of my teachers and of the visitors who were present ; the praise I earned was sweet to my youthful vanity, but while all my companions were able to distinguish themselves in the presence of their parents and relations, it was hard to have no one to share my pleasure.

But this bitter feeling of desertion had all the more effect on my ambition, and when, in the second term, I was the only scholar who received for his pensum (a translation from Hungarian into Latin) the classification "*sine*," that is *without* fault, I began to see what my mother meant when she spoke of "the inheritance of my father," and it was no wonder I took pleasure in forming hazy pictures of my future.

When I ask myself to-day why, in spite of my bodily misery, I felt the spur of ambition, and studied with such diligence, I find that the real reason is to be found, not so much in a disposition favoured by nature, as in my poverty and forlornness. I had no hope of help or protection from any side, the possibility of better times in the future depended entirely on my industry and activity, and that is why I worked so hard.

Though fortune had smiled on me at the beginning of my student's life, it was less kind to me later in the matter of daily existence, and it seemed

as though I were to be strengthened in my youth by means of hard struggle for the even harder struggle I was to go through in the future.

On account of my worldly, or rather Christian, studies, I soon lost the favour of my orthodox Jewish friend who had let me lodge in his house, and I had to look for another lodging, without having a penny in my pocket. It was the same with my meals, and for similar reasons I was reduced to five meals a week, later even to four. Jewish charity was not compatible with Christian education, and only amongst the more enlightened of the Orthodox Jews—the mere idea of neologism was then almost unknown—did real humanity and pity for the starving boy gain the upper hand. It may, in some cases, have been the result of the altered circumstances of my kind but mostly poor benefactors, since they needed every mouthful of food they had for their own increasing families. In any case, I soon began to suffer the pangs of hunger; the strict diet I was obliged to keep to, only stimulated my already healthy appetite, and my feelings as I sat in a corner of the courtyard, learning my lessons while other boys of my age were dining at their parents' tables, are indescribable. I feasted with my eyes, and felt as though I could have disposed of the contents of a baker's shop. The hungry-looking eyes of a healthy boy, full of life, speak the most eloquent language in the world. Later on, in my adventur-

ous life, I often came face to face with the dreadful monster called "hunger." His horrible, grinning features have impressed themselves indelibly in my memory, for hunger caused me to suffer equal pangs in my miserable lodging in the large town, or among the sand-hills of the steppes of Central Asia.

I found another lodging with a childless couple; the man was a cap-maker, and as his wife wished to have some one to talk to in her free hours, her choice fell upon me; for even then, in spite of all my privations and struggles, I was known for my lively manner and untiring loquacity.

As the lodging of this worthy couple consisted of one room only, I was given a corner in the kitchen, where I was allowed to spread my straw mattress every night; during the day I was either at school or in the court, and in the middle of the day, when there was no school, I either wandered about in the streets or sat in a corner of our court reading or learning my lessons.

For a time false pride had gained the day over hunger, and the pieces of bread I received from my schoolfellows in return for helping them with their lessons replaced the mid-day meal; but when they noticed that the colour was gradually leaving my cheeks, and that my liveliness decreased, their hearts were touched, and I was invited to dinner, sometimes by one, sometimes by another; so that, at the end of the term, my position as *protégé* of

the school was assured, and as second in the class I had gained the love of my schoolmates.

Two of them were specially kind to me in those days. One was a Herr von Vaymár, later on a distinguished lawyer in Tirnau ; the other a Herr Hieronymi, later Hungarian Minister of Commerce, who recognised me thirty-five years afterwards in the house of the Director of the National Museum, Von Pulszky, and was agreeably surprised at the metamorphosis that had taken place in his former *protégé*.

Now came the delightful holidays, and with them the time for my return home. The son of a well-to-do peasant from the neighbourhood of Szerdahely gave me a lift in his cart, and it is impossible to describe the delightful feeling with which I crossed the threshold of my parent's door, bearing my certificate, on which my name was written in large golden letters, and showed this first triumphal result of my work to my mother.

My heart understood the meaning of her warm maternal kisses and of the hot tears she shed. Friendly neighbours had managed to explain to her the meaning of the words "classification" and "eminent" in my certificate ; without being able to read them, she stared at my name, written in large letters, and kept remarking, "Of course it is quite natural, for my son Arminius has his dead father's brains, and I am quite sure he will be a success."

These were the happiest moments of my youth.

The delightful "Home, Sweet Home," the comfortable feeling of being with friends, and the knowledge that, for a time at least, I was free from the horrible spectre of hunger, did me a great deal of good. Unfortunately these two months fled like a midsummer night's dream, and when, at the beginning of autumn, I started for St. Georghen, my well-mended clothes in my knapsack, and a few pence in my pocket, the earnest side of life, with all its struggles, was again before me. I bravely tore myself away from my mother's embrace, and so, getting a lift now and then, and walking the rest of the way, I arrived the second time at St. Georghen.

I was now to be in the second class, or *Secunda*, and rise a step in my student's life. The worries and troubles as to board and lodging, and the acquisition of the necessary books had recommenced, and caused me more than once to blush with shame, and in spite of all my self-denial I was unable to procure all I needed.

Unfortunately my new professor in the second class was not so kindly disposed towards me as the dark-haired young priest in the first class had been, and when I went to enter my name in the list, I was received with the not very flattering remark, "Well, Moshele" (the name given to the Jews in general), "why dost thou study? Would it not be better for thee to become a 'kosher' butcher?" In spite of these remarks, which were more malicious

than witty, I found it desirable to show my last year's certificate, and to beg him to be kind to me and protect me. This he promised, smiling, but all the same, during the whole school-year, he not only mocked and scoffed at me, but in spite of my diligence, always kept me back in the class, and very often earnestly advised me not to continue my studies. He was certainly a splendid specimen of a professor whose business it was to guide the youthful mind through the halls of knowledge, humanity, and enlightenment.

But unfortunately this was the prevailing tone among the priests who were entrusted with the school teaching, and roughness and fanaticism flourished undisturbed in the shadow of semi-education. Exceptions were very rare, and from his earliest childhood the Jewish boy of that period received the saddest impressions of the position he was to fill in the future.

The real Magyars, the ruling element in the country, more chivalrously inclined and of marked indifference to religious affairs, have always shown themselves kinder and more tolerant to Jews; but all the more disgraceful was the behaviour of the Slavs, and in spite of my reputation as a good scholar, I was often exposed to the wanton behaviour of passing Christians in the streets of St. Georghen, had stones thrown at me, and was greeted with the insulting "Shide Makhele! Hep! Hep! Hep!" and other similar titles.

The second year at St. Georghen was anything but agreeable, and was full of privations of every kind. Only once or twice a week did I have sufficient to eat, and oh, the bitterly cold nights in the kitchen of the cap-maker, with only a miserable counterpane as covering! When my misery was at its height I received, through the kindness of my last year's teacher, the employment of "boots" in the monastery, where I had to make my appearance early in the morning, in order to clean the boots placed outside the doors of three professors, and sometimes to brush their clothes. I performed this office in the corridor, by the light of the fire blazing in the stove, which not only warmed me but gave me sufficient light to learn my lessons by, and so I always managed to appear at school with my lessons well prepared. And when I was able to still my hunger with a piece of bread or some potatoes, I was the liveliest amongst my comrades, and was even able at times to move my surly professor to a smile.

My sojourn in St. Georghen gave me the first proof of how much youth can bear. Hunger, cold, mockery, and insult, I experienced them all in turn; but the greatest misery was not capable of darkening the serene sky of youthful mirth for more than a few minutes, and even my healthy colour returned after a short interval of bodily collapse.

Although I had only just completed my fourteenth year, I had made many plans for the future,

and built many castles in the air. While other scholars spent their time in games and in sport, I had always indulged in the delight of reading books about travel, heroic deeds, and simply-written historical works, and a book was to me not only a friend and comforter in trouble, but it even drove away hunger; for the fire of my excited fancy nourished not only my mind but my body too, and occupied my senses to such an extent that I often forgot both hunger and sleep.

Extraordinary was the change that took place in me as far as religion was concerned. There was, of course, not a trace of the excessive ardour of Jewish orthodoxy left. Fringes and phylacteries had long been done away with; the law as to ritual food seemed to me childish and ridiculous, and I had been prevented touching pork only by my aversion to the unaccustomed taste. The glimpse I had already had into the various religions, the acquaintance gradually gained with the causes of certain natural phenomena, which superstition had formerly interpreted quite differently, and, lastly, the vast difference I found between principle and action in my Catholic teachers, had nearly upset all my beliefs; they trembled on their bases.

Of a complete want of religious feeling or of conversion to another faith there could be no question, but in the ladder that was to lead me to heaven many rungs were broken, some even

missing entirely, and in the midst of the hard struggle for life I had neither time nor inclination to soar to the higher regions of metaphysical contemplation.

It was chiefly my experiences during the time I spent in service in the monastery of the Piarists in St. Georghen which stimulated my indifference in religious matters. The contrast between the way of speaking and of acting of these ecclesiastics was often very marked. They did not seem so very particular as to religious observances, and when one morning the student who had been ordered to serve at the early Mass did not appear on the scene, I had to put on the cassock and serve as though I had been one of the regular acolytes. I knew the catechism by heart, they said, and was quite like a Catholic: there was no need to make any difficulty about it. I enjoyed the comedy very much, and this and similar experiences were a good preparation for my future *rôle* of Mohammedan priest. It was towards the end of the second year that the idea of leaving St. Georghen for the larger provincial town of Presburg, in the same neighbourhood, took firmer root in my mind; I hoped to find more opportunities for study there and better means of livelihood. When I thought of the sufferings and deprivations I had gone through in St. Georghen at the beginning of my stay there, it was not hard for me to take up my staff and seek my fortune elsewhere. Only the

thought that my father's grave was in the churchyard of St. Georghen made me waver, for many a time had I gone out there in moments of bitterness and wept away my trouble on the grave. And now I was to leave it.

It was during one of these visits that I resolved to do away with the crutch I had till then carried under my left arm, and which not only gave rise to many satirical remarks among my schoolfellows, but also wore out my coat-sleeve. In a fit of vanity I broke the crutch over my father's gravestone, and with a heavy heart and slow, laborious steps I returned to the town, hopping most of the way on one foot. At first it was very hard to walk, but being now in my fifteenth year I was much stronger, and, aided by my vanity, and with the help of a stick, I was soon able to overcome all difficulties.

I limped more than I had done, but at least I was rid of my crutch, and I soon left St. Georghen with my knapsack (no heavy burden) and my certificate containing the classification "Eminent." By my mother's advice I was not to spend the next holidays at home but with her relatives in Moravia, in the town of Lundenburg. The place of my destination seemed further off than did later the most distant parts of inner Asia. I had arrived in Presburg, the famous old coronation town, without a penny in my pocket. After having wandered about helplessly in the streets, and

gazed my fill at the high houses all around me, and having had a good meal at the expense of an acquaintance from Szerdahely, whom I met by chance in the town, my attention was attracted by a cart which was just being laden preparatory to starting for Vienna. I was told that the cart belonged to a hackney-coachman of the name of Alexander, a rough but good-natured man, who would perhaps take me with him to Vienna for nothing, if I could manage to gain his heart.

Trembling, I proffered my request, and having inspected me from head to foot, he said there was no more room on the box, but if I could make myself comfortable in the basket of hay strapped on to the back of the conveyance, he had no objection to taking me with him. In a minute I had climbed into the basket, and making myself comfortable in the soft hay, I started for the imperial town of Vienna, undisturbed by the jerks of the rumbling vehicle.

Arrived in Vienna, I had first to look up a relative, from whom I hoped to receive the necessary sum to take me to Lundenburg, for in 1845 there was already a railway between Vienna and that town.

Mr. G., a well-to-do calico manufacturer, received me very kindly, kept me in his house for two days, and gave me money for a third-class ticket, besides a few pence for travelling necessities. Quite delighted, I started for the Nordbahn. I

was to travel by rail for the first time, and intending to provide myself with plenty of food for the journey, I bought a quantity of fruit and various dainties, especially my favourite kind of confectionery, the so-called butter-cake.

But on arriving at the ticket-office I found, to my horror, that I had spent too much; had, in fact, bought ten or fifteen butter-cakes more than I should have done. As the Arabic proverb says, "The stomach is the origin of all troubles," and here was I in a sorry plight! What was to be done? With a disturbed countenance I told the clerk at the ticket-office of the plight I was in. He laughed, and advised me to ask in Latin for the missing sum from some gentlemen who were standing in a corner of the hall. As it was nearly time to start, I picked up courage and approached the group of gentlemen, saying in everyday Latin: "*Domini spectabiles, rogo humillime, dignemini mihi dare aliquantos cruciferos qui iter ferrarium solvendi mihi carent*" ("Honoured gentlemen, would you give me a few pence, as I have not enough to pay for my railway ticket?"). This Latin speech from a small, lame boy, such as I was, had its effect, and they soon collected about two shillings for me. So I took my ticket, and hopping gaily through the waiting-room, got into a compartment of the train for Lundenburg.

Those who know anything of the bond which draws Jewish families together, will not be as-

tonished that my uncle, David Malavan, received the son of his sister, who had emigrated to Hungary years before, with open arms, and that my other relatives were kindness itself, and did all they could to make my holidays pleasant for me. They gave me a new suit of clothes and a few florins to take me home again, and I started just before the term began, travelling by Vienna to Presburg.

It was not long before I discovered that it was to be my fate in the old Hungarian coronation town to lead a life of martyrdom. I was never very much attracted by large towns; the narrow horizon, enclosed between two rows of high houses, and the hard pavement seemed to me to be in keeping with the narrow-mindedness and hardness of heart of the inhabitants, and the more I missed the blue sky the sadder I became inwardly. After many useless wanderings I came to the conclusion that there could be no question here of a free lodging, and was very glad when a certain Mr. Lövy, whose son had failed in his examination in the second class, offered me shelter in return for helping his son with his lessons. True it was only half of a folding-bed, which by day was pushed behind a bench, but I accepted it with delight.

As far as my board was concerned, I was destined by fate to go through all the torments of Tantalus. Mr. Lövy had a cookshop, and soon after midday the one room in our small lodging began to fill with poor students and tailors' journeymen, to whom, for

the modest sum of threepence, a meal was served, consisting of soup, meat, and vegetables, not in very large quantities, it is true, and showing very primitive culinary skill, but all the same sufficient to satisfy the heroes of the thimble and the doctors-to-be. Custom there was plenty, and there would have been even more had not Mr. Lövy made a rule that any one failing to pay three times was not to enter the house again. Strangers, the length of whose purse was as yet unknown, could easily indulge in the luxury of *one* dinner, but my destitute state was well known to my landlord, and so I had no credit even for a single meal. The state of my feelings as I sat at dinner-time in a corner of the room, trying in vain to keep my eyes fixed on my book, and feeling all the gnawing pains of hunger, may well be imagined, and now and then I could not help stealing a glance at the students and tailors as they sat at table enjoying their meal.

This eager, hungry look of a starving lad seemed sometimes to appeal to them, for now and then one or other of them would make a sign to me to finish the vegetables he had left, or some one pressed a piece of bread into my hand ; so that I generally managed to get a trifle to still the worst pangs of hunger, and partly to satisfy the inner man, which had already caused me so much trouble in my short life.

The reader will see from this that my position in Presburg was not of the most brilliant. In

school matters I was not much better off. I was to study in the third class at the college of the Benedictine monks, and when I went to Father Aloysius Pendl to enter my name in the list, his fat reverence received me with the following words, "Well, Harshl, so you want to be a doctor, do you?" The fact that I had formerly been dubbed "Moshele," and now "Harshl," did not vex me in the least, but it was unpleasant as proving what treatment I had to expect in the future ; and the three years I went to the college under the archway in Presburg will never be forgotten by me, recalling as they do endless instances of stupid priestly animosity and disgraceful intolerance.

Later on in life I again met that amiable director, Father *Pendl*, who ought to have been used as a *pendulum* on a village church spire, rather than have been placed at the head of a college. Our second meeting was under quite different circumstances. I was then an honoured traveller in the Monastery of Martinsberg, and although he did not remember me, I have never forgotten him. Unfortunately the personality of the teacher is not without influence on the subjects he teaches, and in the third class, and even more in the fourth, I found that my desire for study was rapidly decreasing, and that my visits to school partook more and more of the nature of forced labour, so that I was happiest when I was able, after having learnt my lessons, to read or study for my own pleasure, that is, when I could occupy my

youthful mind in my own way, without control from others.

The ease with which I made use of the Latin tongue for general conversation, and also the fact that when I began my studies I knew four languages—Hungarian, German, Slav, and Hebrew—was the reason I turned my attention to the acquirement of other languages. I had heard that a knowledge of French was necessary in order to be considered *bon ton*, and that without it no one could pretend to any education worth speaking of. So I decided to learn the language at once, and bought a small grammar by a certain La Fosse, which possessed the advantage of giving the pronunciation of the words in German transcription, thus making the help of a teacher unnecessary. It was, of course, a miserable pronunciation, but I worked my way through the book the best way I could, and, as with the help of the Latin I knew, I was soon able to understand books written in a simple style, I was, after a few weeks' time, full of hope that I should soon be able to speak French.

When alone I used to make up sentences or carry on a conversation with myself, or read the most trivial things, declaiming them with great pathos; and in the space of a few months I had learnt so much that I had (especially in the lower class I was in) acquired a reputation for a much greater knowledge of French than I really had. Whether it was my own deceptive self-conscious-

ness supported by the ignorance of those whom I associated with, or my natural talent for languages which was then beginning to show itself, I do not know; certain it is that I conversed in French without restraint, and by my volubility surprised not only myself but all who heard me. It developed to such a mania with me, that I addressed every one in French—peasants, tradespeople, merchants, Slavs, Germans, and Hungarians, it was all the same to me, and great was my delight if they stared at me and admired me for my learning (?). Such juvenile tricks were the only amusement I had in my otherwise very hard life. In every other respect I was excessively badly off, and there is not a stone in the little town on the Danube that could not tell pitiable tales of my extreme misery and suffering.

As long as I had half of the folding-bed at Mr. Lövy's I was at least sure of a shelter, and had only to fight against hunger. But one evening I had for a bedfellow a young man, just arrived from a foreign country, and from him I caught an illness which showed itself after some days in constant irritation of the skin, and in consequence of which I was immediately sent away by Mr. Lövy. As I owed that good man a few pence he retained all my personal effects as payment of the debt; so one dull autumn evening I left the house with my school-books under my arm, and wandered about in the streets, not daring to apply for shelter for

fear of being turned out again on account of my disease.

It was nine o'clock, when, quite exhausted by hunger and fatigue, I sank down on a bench in the Promenade. My glance fell upon the windows of the one-storied houses opposite ; I saw children at table having supper, while farther on there were others playing games and running and jumping about. I heard a piano being played, thought of home and my mother, and, seized with a feeling of unutterable loneliness, I began to cry bitterly.

Having put my boots under my head for a pillow, I had just lain down on the bench to try to sleep, when I heard the tramp of regular footsteps approaching from a distance.

"That is the watchman," I thought, "going his nightly round."

Trembling with the fear of being discovered and taken up as a vagabond, to spend the night in a cell, I crept under the bench and hid there until the watchman, wrapped in his long cloak, had passed on. He did not notice me, and thus I was saved from the shame of spending a night in prison.

Of course there was no further possibility of sleep that night, and with an anxious heart I peered out from under the bench. The lights in the windows were extinguished one by one, the watchman passed several times, but not very near to me, and I lay there, cowering under the bench the whole of that

cold autumn night, till the break of day. I went to school that day, but gave notice that I was ill, and it was only after a fortnight's sojourn in the hospital of the Friars of Mercy that, once more in good health and much stronger, I was able to start again on my thorny way.

After this sad interval my natural liveliness soon returned. I finished the third and fourth classes in Presburg at the Benedictine College the best way I could, but I took far more interest in the progress I was making in my private studies than in satisfying my professors. This certainly had no good result, for I had begun to study alone, without first acquiring the solid foundation of a college education; but on the other hand it spurred me on to greater industry and perseverance, as, being free from all control, I was master and pupil in one person.

Like all autodidacts, I had greatly overrated the results of my work, paying no attention whatever to the difference between reading a thing superficially and learning it thoroughly. The consequence was I fell into faults that I have never been able to eradicate. But I learned with delight and diligence, and being hardened by constant struggles against Fate, questions of material comfort ceased to trouble me much.

As my circle of acquaintances widened, it was easier for me to gain my living by teaching. I found shelter with an old bachelor, a usurer,

whose lodging consisted of a single room and a tiny ante-room where I slept, with the usurer's coat for my covering. This shameful old Harpagon begrudged me even the crumbs he left, although I filled the office of man-servant and watch-dog for him ; but he was mistaken in thinking me of much use in the latter capacity, for were I once asleep, a thief, in fact a whole regiment of thieves, could have rushed over my prostrate body without awakening me. Oh ! golden hours of youth ! With what pleasure I dwell on them to-day, when in my soft, comfortable bed I have difficulty in stealing a few hours of sleep from friend Morpheus ! In spite of every comfort and convenience I cannot to-day attain to what I could when I went to bed hungry and slept on the hard, bare boards.

As far as boarding went I was better off just then, for my fame as a teacher had spread in the lower classes of Jewish society, and it was chiefly to cooks and housemaids I gave lessons in reading and writing. In some cases where I had inspired great confidence I was employed to write billets-doux, and in return for this service of love I received a good meal, sometimes even dainties.

I always found that cooks were the persons who most indulged in love-letters ; each one seemed to have been crossed in love, and whether its flame was fanned by proximity to the fire or by other unknown reasons, certain it is that the ladies who practised the culinary art were my best customers,

and if I was able to commit to paper a sigh, a longing look, a greeting sweet as sugar, or even a kiss, I was sure of a rich reward, and could reckon on a good dinner or supper for days to come.

From cooks and housemaids my reputation spread to the young ladies, or rather to the lady of the house. One evening at the request of a cook who was head over ears in love with her boot-maker, I sang the well-known German song—

“Schöne Minka, ich muss scheiden,
Ach, du fühlst nicht die Leiden!”

(“Lovely Minka, I must leave you,
Ah! you cannot guess my sorrow!”)

to the accompaniment of a guitar. My sonorous voice (I had, of course, no idea of singing) seems to have penetrated to the sitting-room, and made a favourable impression, for the attention of the lady of the house and her daughters was attracted; I was called into the room, made to sing some songs, and when the lady smoothed my curls and praised my voice and my hair, I became aware that I had stumbled upon a *gradus ad Parnassum*, and that I was in for a good time.

I was not engaged in the house itself, for the aristocratic feelings of plutocracy revolted against the idea of employing the cook's teacher. But I was recommended to others, and was soon introduced into the Jewish society of Presburg (the lines between which and Christian circles were very

distinctly defined in those days) as private teacher of Hungarian, French, and Latin.

The sum received for these lessons was, of course, in proportion to the age and position of the teacher, very modest, sometimes not exceeding two florins a month, which worked out at about one penny an hour. But when my teaching was attended with great success my salary was raised, and thus I was enabled, by dint of devoting three hours a day to teaching, to live pretty comfortably, for things were cheap in Presburg in those days. I was at all events freed from my greatest care, the question of daily bread, and was even able now and then to buy some article of second-hand clothing; and oh! how proud I was when I bought with my own hard-earned money a tolerably threadbare coat or pair of trousers!

Unfortunately my success had its bad effects, for after spending eight hours a day at school and three or four in teaching, there was little time left for my private studies. Besides, even this small success awoke in me a desire for the pleasures of life, such as a visit to the theatre now and then, or a piece of cake; and I was in danger of losing my zeal in the pursuit of higher aims.

In spite of all I had gone through I was childish and frivolous enough to allow my head to be turned by the watery ray of sunshine that Fate had sent me. The knowledge that I was now well fed and

tolerably well clothed would have made me presumptuous had not Divine Providence sent me a timely warning and roused me from my lethargy.

This warning was conveyed by the War of Independence of 1848, which had just broken out. At the first approach of the storm the schools were closed and lectures discontinued. Commerce was stopped, and every one was anxious as to the result of the storm that was breaking over their heads. To make matters worse, the mob in Presburg began a regular persecution of the Jews, plundering the ghetto, breaking into houses and shops, and destroying hundreds of barrels of wine and spirits in the cellars.

The maddened and drunken mob then stormed through the Judengasse, on to the Wödritz, and round the Zuckermendl, and the cries and wailings of the persecuted Jews rang in every one's ears for some time after. Thus the busy little colony was cast into poverty and despair.

I was rudely waked from the enjoyment of my imaginary good fortune; but my chief feeling was one of disgust at the horrible executions of Hungarian patriots, stigmatised as rebels, which I, in my youthful curiosity, attended on the so-called Eselsberg, behind the fortress. Two of these bloody scenes especially took deep root in my memory. One was the execution of Baron Mednyanszky, the commander of the little fortress of Leopoldstadt, taken by the Austrians, and of his

adjutant, by name Gruber. Both were young, and, laughing and talking, they walked arm-in-arm to the scaffold. When I saw how those constables of the Camarilla treated the corpses of these martyrs for freedom, swinging them by the feet as they hung on the gallows, I was overcome by a strange feeling of revenge. I called the Slav soldiers several opprobrious names, and it would have gone hard with me had I not hurried away.

The second awful picture I have in my mind's eye is another execution I witnessed on the same spot, namely, that of a Lutheran clergyman called Razga, who was condemned to be hanged for preaching a sermon of Hungarian national tendency. This noble man was accompanied from his prison to the place of execution by his wife and children. Embracing and comforting his dear ones, he walked to the gallows with a firm step, and when the Profos had read the sentence and broken the staves, the heroic churchman kissed each member of his family, and gave himself into the hands of his executioners. Mother and children (I do not know how many there were) knelt on the ground near to the scaffold, their sorrowful gaze fixed on the condemned husband and father, and several of them fainted, overcome by sorrow.

This scene brought tears to the eyes even of the soldiers, and the reader may imagine what an impression it left on a sentimental youth like me.

The present generation of Hungarians has, for

political reasons, drawn a veil over this and other dreadful scenes ; but it can only partially cover them, for those who were present will always remember them with a shudder.

My further residence in Presburg had become impossible, and I began to look about for an engagement in the country. I accepted the offer of a poor Jew in the village of Marienthal, near Presburg, to spend some months in his house in the capacity of family preceptor. There, in a quiet valley of the Carpathians, I could once more devote myself to my private studies, and when I returned to town with my modest earnings in my pocket, I decided not to enter the sixth class at the Benedictine college, but at the Protestant Lyceum, as the professors there were known to be unprejudiced, humane, and intelligent men, and I was heartily tired of the everlasting drudgery for the fanatic monks.

At the Lyceum the language spoken was mostly German, and the lectures were better in every way, so that I might have got on very well there had not my difficulties in procuring the necessities of life recommenced, and partly withdrawn my attention from my studies. At that time I was eighteen years old, and weary of my eight years' struggle with all the moods of Fate. My spirit was so broken that I decided to pause in my studies for a year, and take an engagement as tutor in a country family, and then, having earned the necessary means, return to town and take up the thread of my studies again.

The Private Tutor



CHAPTER III

THE PRIVATE TUTOR

“DOCENDO DISCIMUS” (“by teaching we learn”) says the Latin proverb, and according to this I must have had the very best opportunities for acquiring those scientific accomplishments necessary to the attainment of the object I had in view. Nevertheless it was with a heavy heart that I left the school, where I ought to have remained to finish the regular course of my studies, and went out into the world as —a *wild student*, without discipline, without system, without even the supervision which my age and inexperience demanded. Being on a visit to my uncle at Zsámbokrét, in the county of Neutra, I first made the acquaintance of Mr. von Petrikovich, a small landowner and postmaster. He was a clever, unprejudiced, and worthy man, who had had his eye on me for some time because of my readiness in foreign languages, and he now engaged me as tutor, or rather as teacher of languages, to his two sons. I was to receive full board and a salary of 150 florins, a very modest honorarium, but quite

in keeping with the very modest services which I was able to render. For, apart from my knowledge of Hungarian and Latin, my learning was very deficient, and as regards my office of prefect—such was my title—I was rather pupil than master. Mrs. von Petrikovich, a highly-accomplished woman, who had been brought up in very aristocratic surroundings, and thought a great deal of good behaviour, manners and dress, soon found to her grief that the prefect, in spite of his linguistic accomplishments, was a very unpolished individual, who could scarcely be expected to teach her sons drawing-room manners. She therefore undertook the difficult task of first educating the tutor, and the trouble the good lady took to instruct me on all possible points of etiquette, showing me how to handle my serviette, fork and knife at table, how to salute, walk, stand, and sit, was indeed a brilliant proof of her kind-heartedness. I became a totally different being during this, my first sojourn, in a gentleman's family, and I was so much in earnest that I spent whole hours over my toilet, and in practising bows, and the elegant movements of head and hands. I attended fairly well to my duties as tutor, but my own studies suffered considerably under the influence of this training. I became seriously inclined to vanity, and wasted not only my time before the looking-glass and in the drawing-room, but also my substance; and the few florins which I ought to have saved to recom-

mence my studies dwindled away so fast, that at the end of the year I had not even the sixteen florins left, which I owed to the Lutheran Lyceum at Presburg, and without which I could not get my certificate, or rather testimonial of merit. It was indeed unpardonable thoughtlessness which had thus led me into debt, an offence for which I had to suffer many sharp pricks of conscience, and which cost me dear. Was it because for the first time in my life I enjoyed the comfort of living free from care? Was it this that so enthralled my senses and captivated my whole being? Or was it the outcome of some hidden, frivolous trait in my character? I cannot account for it. All I know is that I felt very miserable when, in the autumn of 1851, I went to Pest with Mr. Petrikovich, this worthy man having taken his sons there to attend the public school. Thus I left the quiet haven of the Petrikovich's home, and found myself once more launched on the stormy sea of wretchedness and disappointment.

Pest, now Budapest, the beautiful, flourishing capital of the kingdom of Hungary, boasted at that time nothing of the pomp and grandeur which it now possesses, for the Austrian reign of terror which followed the struggle for independence had left its sorrowful mark upon the city and the people. After taking leave of Mr. Petrikovich, I turned into one of the less frequented back streets in search of inexpensive lodgings, *i.e.*, a bed, eventually half a

bed ; and the same terrible despondency which had taken hold of me on my first arrival at Presburg came over me again in all its intensity. For half a day I wandered round without success ; nobody would take me in without references and part payment in advance. At last I was reluctantly obliged to go to the house of a wealthy relative, who allowed me to remain with him for a few days, and then slipping two florins into my hand, he gave me the paternal advice to try and find something to do, as his wife objected to my presence there. I went straight to some of the coffee-houses to inquire from the tradespeople hanging about if they could help me to a position as teacher of languages. My timid and dejected appearance attracted the attention and called forth the sympathy, of a certain Mr. G. He began to talk to me, and the end of it was that he proposed I should enter his service as tutor to his children in return for board and lodging, to which, of course, I agreed at once. Alas for my studies ! Mr. G. lived on the Herminenplatz, a good way from the college of the Piarists, which I wanted to attend. The grand-sounding word *quarter* (lodging) consisted of a bed in the servants' room, which I shared with the cook, the chambermaid, and one of the children, while the board was so extremely poor and scanty that the memory of the various meals of the day was rather in my thoughts than in my stomach. And yet for this meagre fare I had much to do and to

suffer. The untrained children were always worrying me, and when they had gone to bed and I tried to get on with some of my school preparations, or private studies, the cook and the chambermaid began to sing, or to quarrel, or to play tricks upon me, and made it absolutely impossible for me to do any work. In the long run this became unbearable, and hard though it was, I gave notice to leave. As I had not the public certificate, for which I could not pay the necessary sixteen florins to the Lyceum at Presburg, I had only been admitted to the Piarist school for three months as provisional student of the seventh class. For want of the said official certificate from the previously finished classes, I was compelled to leave the school, and I took the bold resolve to turn my back once and for all upon the town and public study, and to find a place in the country as private tutor.

I call this a bold resolve, but it was also a very painful one, for henceforth I had quitted for ever the road which was to lead me to a definite profession in life, and as I had devoted myself to the aimless study of foreign languages, I drifted into a road the end of which I did not know myself, and which I was certainly not led to follow by the faintest glimmer of future events. The danger of my position gradually became clear to me, for in the hard struggle of life, now lasting already for ten years, only the momentary deliverance from suffering and privation had been before my eyes, and

now again this one thought, this one care filled my mind: Will my plan succeed, shall I find a good place as private tutor? My fitness for the office consisted in the knowledge of a few languages, and a slight acquaintance with one or two more. I could read German, French, and Italian fairly well without the help of a dictionary; Hebrew and Latin I knew slightly, and of course I could speak and write my two native tongues, viz., Hungarian and Slav. On the strength of these accomplishments I had the audacity to advertise myself as professor of seven languages, and in my arrogance I even pretended to teach them all.

This was certainly a sufficiently striking sign-board and quite in keeping with the market where I hoped to dispose of my intellectual wares; for at best I could only expect to take a position in a homely Jewish family, who, with slight knowledge of philology and pædagogy, would be perfectly satisfied with my pretentious assertions. Far from wishing to act under false pretences, I tried to fulfil my office to the very best of my ability; I taught languages after the method by which I myself had learned them, viz., the so-called Jacotot method, and in most cases I had the satisfaction of seeing my pupils so well advanced in any one language within six months that they could read easy passages and also speak a little. I was equally successful in other branches of learning, such as history, geography, and arithmetic, so that

without claiming any pædagogic merit, but simply by honest effort and perseverance, I managed to fulfil my office as tutor fairly satisfactorily.

Not without some interest are the different ways and means by which I secured my appointments as private tutor, and for curiosity's sake, I will relate them here. Advertising in newspapers was at that time either not the custom in Hungary or of very little use ; besides, for lack of the necessary means this method was quite closed to me. But there were professional agents or brokers, as they were commonly called, who undertook to provide teachers with situations, and also to find tutors for such country families as could afford the luxury of a private tutor. These were chiefly merchants or farmers living in the provinces, who came to Pest every year at the time of the two great general fairs, and after disposing of their goods—*i.e.*, after they had sold their wool, gall-nuts, corn, skins, &c., proceeded to make the necessary purchases for their house and farm. The domestic wants were supplied by the various stores, but to procure a tutor, a “kosher” butcher, or brandy distiller, there were certain coffee-houses—*i.e.*, places where the brokers in that particular line could be consulted, and the pædagogic strength at disposal inspected. As educational exchange, the Café Orczy, on the high-road of Pest, enjoyed in those days a special popularity. This dirty place, reeking with the smell of various kinds of tobacco—which even

now after forty years has for the most part preserved its old physiognomy—was then crowded with town and country Jews of all sorts and descriptions ; some sipping their coffee, others talking and wildly gesticulating, others again bargaining and shouting, all making a deafening noise. In the afternoon, between two and four, the crush and the clatter were at their worst in this pædagogic exchange. At that time everybody of any importance was there, and on a bench at the side the eligible teachers were seated, anxiously watching the agent as he extricated himself from the crowd and with the purchaser, *i.e.*, the future principal, stood before the bench, reviewed the candidates and called up one or the other of them. It was always a most painful scene, of which I have since often been reminded when visiting the slave markets in the bazaars of Central Asia, and the remembrance of it even now makes me shudder whenever I pass the Café Orczy. With a heavy heart and deeply ashamed I used to sit there for hours many afternoons together, until at last Mr. Mayer (that was the name of my agent) came up to me accompanied by a son of Mercury engaged in agricultural pursuits, told me to rise, and, all the time expatiating upon my tremendous cleverness, introduced me to the farmer. Of course I had to support the zealous broker in the glorification of my own littleness—just as the slave has to prove his muscular strength in the bazaars of Central

Asia by the execution of his *tours de force*—and after the amount of the annual honorarium had been fixed and I had presented my references, the farmer paid me the earnest money, the greater portion of which was claimed by the broker for the trouble he had taken, while I with the shabby remainder had to cover the cost of my equipment, and eventually my travelling expenses.

This was the regular routine of business on such occasions, and both buyer and seller benefited by it. I have always been struck by the great desire for culture evinced even by the most illiterate Jewish merchant. He spares no pains and no trouble to give his children a better education than he himself enjoyed; for in spite of his strong materialistic tendencies he has higher ideals in his mind for the future of his children.

The first engagement I obtained in this manner was with Mr. Rosenberg, in Kutyevo, a village in Slavonia. He was the eldest son of the family, only a few years my senior, who had to do some business for his father at the St. Joseph fair, and amongst other things had also to find a teacher for his younger brothers and sisters. The young man had looked at me, somewhat abashed, but I began to talk to him in fluent French, of which he had some faint notion, and this had its effect; he took a liking to me, engaged me, and a few days later I went with him by steamer to Eszegg, and from there by carriage to the village of Kutyevo

in a charming valley of the Slavonic mountains. My reception at Mr. Rosenberg's house was just as unfortunate as when I first came to Nyék—that is to say, they thought I looked too young, that my cheeks were too red, and that with such attributes I should probably lack the dignity and gravity so indispensable to a teacher. The principal cause of this fear seems to have been Miss Emily, the eldest daughter of the house, a charming girl of sixteen, who also was to refresh herself at the fountain of my wisdom, and according to the mother's judgment the small difference in age between teacher and pupil might lead to grave consequences. As things turned out the good lady was not far wrong in this. Otherwise they were all very kind to me. I had a good room, excellent food, and as I had to teach only six hours a day, I had time enough to devote myself with all my might to philological studies. It was here that I first began to give my studies a definite direction, for after acquiring a so-called knowledge of several European languages I passed on to Turkish, and therewith turned my attention to Oriental studies. The consciousness of having missed the help of regular schooling, and the formal discharge in the ordinary course, caused me many pangs of conscience, for I knew it was all through my own unpardonable recklessness, namely, in neglecting twice over to save the sixteen florins wherewith to redeem the school certificate. I reproached myself most unmercifully, called myself a good-for-nothing,

and determined henceforth to work with unremitting zeal, to make use of every moment, and by increased diligence to redeem the past. In my excessive remorse I even went so far as to write in Turkish characters—so as not to be read by any one else—on my books, on my writing-table, on the walls of my room, such words as “Persevere!” “Be ashamed of yourself!” “Work!” These were to act as a stimulant and constant warning not to fall again into the same error.

I could the more easily keep this firm resolve to myself, as my linguistic studies had now carried me beyond the mere mechanical committing of passages to memory, and enabled me to enjoy the more intellectual pleasure of reading the classical works of foreign lands. This filled my leisure hours with exquisite delight. Was it the loneliness of village life which made work such a recreation to me, or was it the glorious feeling of being able to read these master-works of other nations in the original tongue? Enough, my pleasure in reading was unbounded; every thought seemed divine, every metaphor a veritable gem of poesy; and my reading, or more often reciting, was constantly interrupted by exclamations of surprise and admiration, and the margins of the various texts were covered with notes and comments expressive of my rapturous appreciation. The works which at that time especially took my fancy were: *The Seasons*, by Thomson; the *Henriade*, by Voltaire;

the *Sonnets* of Petrarch ; and above all the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso. For hours together I could sit spellbound by the simple and beautiful account of the heroic deeds of love, or drink in with delight the exquisite description of the changing seasons. The noble battle before the walls of Jerusalem or the charming disquisitions of Thomson, all had the same magic charm for me. The precursors of awakening spring or the glories of an English summer landscape filled my cup of delight to the very brim, and the winter picture of the homely company gathered round the crackling cottage fire brought me into an equally enthusiastic frame of mind. When reading the *Henriade* I was particularly fascinated by the heroic figure of Henry IV. ; while the *Sonnets* of Petrarch were the silent interpreters of my awakening passion for the daughter of the house, and I would gladly have substituted the name of Emily for that of Laura, if the rhythm and the Argus eye of "Mamma" had not prevented me. Tasso's immortal epic exercised a truly magic charm upon my youthful imagination. I liked best to read out of doors, far from all human sounds ; it seemed to suit my imaginative fancy ; and as long as the weather was fit my favourite spot used to be on a hill just outside the village, overshadowed by a large cherry-tree, and close to a gently murmuring stream. There in the early morning hours, and in the evenings between five and eight I used to while away my time in the

company of my favourite poets. There I repeated the sonnets of Petrarch, with my eyes fixed upon the house where Emily dwelt. There I recited my Tasso with wild enthusiasm, and it was there that one afternoon I was so absorbed in that wonderful passage where the poet compares the battle of the Saracens before Jerusalem to claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, that I had never noticed the gathering thunderstorm over my own head ; I did not hear the peals of thunder and heeded not the lightning, until I was rudely awakened from my trance by the rain coming down in torrents, and wetting me to the skin. Often I was so oblivious of everything, that I held long discourses with birds or flowers or grass-blades, and never stopped until some passer-by interrupted the current of my thoughts. Thus it came about that at a very early age Mother Nature had become so dear to me ; and a fine morning not only put me in good trim for the whole day, but for many days after. I always chose the most secluded spots for my favourite studies—places where I could be safe from sudden interruptions ; and so, living in a world of flowery imagery, and burning with the fire of enthusiasm and fantasy, I began to build my airy castles for the future. To the seven languages I knew I had gradually added Spanish, Danish, and Swedish, all of which I learnt in a comparatively short time, sufficiently at any rate to appreciate the literary productions of these various countries. I revelled in the poetry of

Calderon, Garcilazo de la Vega, Andersen, Tégner, and Atterbon, but at the same time I made steady progress in Turkish, for in my passion for learning, strengthened by an ever-growing power of retention, I had indeed accomplished wonders. Whenever in my readings I came upon words that I did not know the meaning of, I wrote them down and committed them to memory, at first from ten to twenty per day, but gradually I managed to learn as many as eighty or even a hundred, and to remember them also. With a determined will, a young man in the vigour of youth can do almost anything. True, I made many mistakes, and often had to unlearn again what I had learnt; many a time I found myself on the wrong track, but there was always satisfaction in the consciousness that I had not wasted my time, that I had not squandered the precious years of my youth. In this consciousness I boldly faced the future with all the disappointments which possibly might await me in the thorny path of life, whether owing to accident or to my own fault.

The happiness of my idyllic rest and careless existence in the beautiful valley of the Slavonic mountains came abruptly to an end; and after a sojourn of eighteen months in Kutyevo, my fair, smiling sky was once more darkened by gathering clouds. As teacher I had fulfilled my duty; as pedagogue Mr. Rosenfeld was satisfied with me, but as man, *i.e.*, young man, my conduct was con-

sidered objectionable and detrimental to the reputation of the young lady, who was expected to make a good match. As already noted, my eyes were rather too frequently fixed upon the shining orbs of the charming Miss Emily ; and although the latter, more from plutocratic pride than innate prudishness, took good care not to give the poor, lame tutor the slightest encouragement, the parents nevertheless thought it necessary to guard against such an eventuality, and decided to dismiss me. The actual cause which hastened this decision was, as far as I can remember, a lesson in writing. For when I noticed that Miss Emily did not form some of her letters quite correctly, I took hold of her hand to guide it. The contact with the white, plump little hand—although at first I managed to guide it mechanically—soon sent the fire of passion tingling into my finger-tips, and when a gentle pressure revealed the fact that not mere caligraphic zeal but another motive stirred within me, the young lady jumped up, gave me an angry look, and left the room. This decided my fate, and I was dismissed.

The announcement was grievous, even painful to me, not so much because I had to leave my quiet haven of rest, and the beacon of my first and only love, but because here, as in Zsámbokrét, I had proved to be a very bad financier. Of the considerable salary of 600 florins per annum, I had spent most on books and clothes, and only saved enough to take me to Pest, and on to Duna Szer-

dahely, where at my mother's special request I had decided to go, as she had a great desire to see me after an absence of several years. The parting from this quiet spot, where I had spent the happiest eighteen months of my life, was very hard indeed, and when I took leave of the old cherry-tree, under whose shade I had spent so many blissful hours with the intellectual heroes of Italy, England, France and Spain, I cried for hours, and with good reason, for never again in all my life have I had moments of such pure enjoyment.

It goes without saying that during my stay in Slavonia I made myself thoroughly acquainted with the Illyric, *i.e.*, South-Slavonic language, both written and conversational. Well stocked with knowledge, but poor in purse, I now had to face my mother, in whose eyes the material side of life had most value. A few new clothes in my knapsack and a silver watch in my pocket could not satisfy her; she upbraided me with lack of practical common sense, and always wanted to know whither the knowledge of so many languages would lead me, and whether, considering all the time spent in study, I could not get a regular position or appointment of some kind. Higher aims were beyond the ken of the good, practical woman, and although always full of affection for me, she could not help now and then expressing her anxiety as to my future, and hinted that I should have done better to follow the regular course of study, take my degree at the University,

and become a doctor of medicine. I tried once or twice to explain to her that the knowledge of so many, and especially of Oriental, languages might one day make me famous ; that I might become interpreter at one of the embassies ; but she was quite unable to take this in. The uncertainty of my future troubled her much, and it grieved me deeply not to be able to make her see it in a different and better light. After a short visit I again took leave of her, once more to throw myself into the world's turmoil.

As my self-conceit had grown with the acquisition of so many languages, and the stimulus of praise, which up to now had only been vouchsafed to me by the lower classes of society, had puffed me up with egotism, I fancied myself worthy of something better than the humble position of tutor in a Jewish family. I even imagined that my capacities and learning ought to secure me a position under Government, and for this purpose I travelled to Vienna, where I hoped to obtain from the Minister of Foreign Affairs an appointment as interpreter. Of course I failed ; for in the first place I was a perfect stranger and had no introductions, and in the second place I was absolutely ignorant of the preliminary steps that had to be taken ; of the pedantic and tortuous passages of Austrian bureaucracy. Realising the fruitlessness of my efforts, I endeavoured to get private lessons. I

advertised in the Vienna newspapers ; but the high-flown announcements of my mezzofantic perfections remained without the slightest result, and the worthy ladies' tailor, in whose house on the high-road I had hired a bed on the fourth story, was much wiser than I, for he advised me to leave Vienna and go back to Pest, as long as I still had a few books and some clothes to dispose of to defray the travelling expenses ; otherwise, he said, I should fare badly.

I was bound to acknowledge that the tailor had more common sense than I, and the only reason that I did not immediately act upon his suggestion was that I had still a lingering hope that the acquaintances I had made in Vienna might yet shed a little brightness over the horizon of my future career. I had had the good fortune of making the personal acquaintance of some linguistic celebrities. In the hotel "The Wild Man" in Kärthner Street I had met the great Orientalist Baron Hammer Purgstall, who had introduced me to the young Baron Schlechta, and encouraged me to persevere in the study of Turkology. The old gentleman spoke to me of my very learned countrymen in Turkology, Gévay and Huszár, and was of opinion that we Hungarians had most exceptional advantages for the study of Oriental languages. I also came into contact with the great Servian poet and writer, Vuk Karačić. Under his humble roof on the Haymarket I was urged to take up the study of the South-Slavonic tongue ; and his daughter, a

highly cultured lady, took a special interest in my destiny, and was much surprised when I recited with pathos long passages from Davoria, viz., *Heroic Songs*. Mr. Rayewski, the priest of the Russian Embassy, also received me kindly. The good man wanted to win me for Russian literature, perhaps also for its orthodoxy, for he gave me Russian books, and advised me to make a journey to St. Petersburg, whereas I afterwards took my way in quite a different direction. There certainly was no want of good advice, friendly hints and encouragements, but a beautiful lack of practical help.

It was well for me that I turned my back on the beautiful Imperial city of the Danube to try my fortune once again in Pest, where, as Hungarian, I felt more at home. I alighted at a house in the street of the Three Drums, No. 7. It was a house on the level, with a long court, and inhabited for the greater part by poor people who could only pay their rent by letting one or two beds to third parties and sharing their one living room with several others. I lived at door No. 5 with Madame Schönfeld, a certificated nurse, who had but little practice, and an invalid husband into the bargain. Therefore she had four beds for hire put up in her room, in which eight persons, *i.e.*, two in each bed, were accommodated. Poor artisans who spent their days in the workshop had here their night-quarters, and I, a special favourite of the childless Madame Schönfeld, had the privilege of receiving for my bedfellow a

thin tailor-lad, who, because of his lanky proportions, did not take up quite so much room in the bed, and so allowed me a certain amount of comfort ; for although we lay in bed sardine fashion it happened sometimes that the more corpulent and stronger bedfellow kicked his mate out of bed in the night. In these surroundings, which cannot exactly be called regal, I awaited the favourable moment at which that friend of my fortunes (Mr. Mayer, already mentioned) should provide me with another appointment as tutor. Weeks and months passed by, during which time I had to subsist on the scanty remuneration given for private lessons. The more I advanced in my studies the more painful it was to teach French or English for two or three florins per month ; but my poverty-stricken appearance denied me entrance into the better circles of the capital, and as I had no friends I hesitated to approach any one who might possibly have lent me a helping hand. The remembrance of house No. 7 in the street of the Three Drums recalls a series of privations and sufferings in which hunger, that bitter enemy of my younger days, plays a principal part. As long as this terrible tyrant plagued me I was rather spiritless and depressed, and it was only in my books that I could find comfort against the gnawing pain ; for although the Latin proverb rightly says, "*Plenus venter non studet libenter*," I nevertheless have experienced that with an empty or half-satisfied

stomach my intellectual elasticity has been greater and my memory intensified so that I was able to accomplish extraordinary things.

I am not exaggerating when I say that during this interval of my professional duties I devoted daily ten or twelve hours assiduously to linguistic studies. To the Romanic and Germanic languages I had added the study of the Slavonic dialects. The Slovak dialect I had learned conversationally at St. Georghen and Zsámbokrét; Illyric at Kutyevo; I had also studied the literatures of these languages. I now applied myself to learn Russian, which of course was a comparatively easy matter, and I revelled in the works of Pushkin, Lermontoff, Batyushka, Dershavin, and other northern writers. I particularly enjoyed changing about from one poet to another, wandering from north to south, from east to west. Now I read a few pages from the *Orlando Furioso*, then again a few verses from the *Fountain in Bagtcheseraj* of Pushkin, and from the *Prisoner of the Caucasus*. Here an Andalusian picture unrolled itself before my eyes—a charming scene on the glorious Ebro, with its pastoral groups, from Galatea or Estrée. Next I admired a northern sea-fight from the *Frithiof Sága*, or amused myself with Andersen's Fairy Tales, or the simple popular songs of *Gusle* by Vuk Karačić. My joy and my delight were boundless; my eyes shone, my cheeks were flushed. Every fibre in my body tingled with the excite-

ment of the lyric or epic contents of these various works. One can only read with such thorough appreciation, such deep feeling, in one's early twenties, when the knowledge of the language has been acquired with much trouble and alone and when abhorring and despising the mundane character of one's surroundings, and carried away on the wings of one's heated imagination, one roams about in higher spheres. The contrast of my own enthusiastic imagination and the life of the people with whom I associated was about as great as one can well conceive. Bartering Jews of the most prosaic type, artisans, day-labourers, and shop-assistants, their only thought how to earn a few coppers, and to spend them again straight away; menders and cleaners of old clothes, poor women and pedlars—such were the people I associated with, and who, looking upon me as half demented, sometimes pitied and sometimes mocked me. In the winter-time it was very hard, for then I had to suffer from cold as well as hunger, especially when the public reading-room of the University was closed, and I was reduced to sit in Madame Schönfeld's parlour in the Three Drums Street, where no fire was provided in the daytime. In broad daylight it was not so bad, for I could jump up and run up and down to get warm. But when it grew dark I was obliged to go to the Café Szégedin round the corner of the Three Drums Street; and there, huddled up in a corner of the

room, I read my books by the light of a flickering lamp, regardless of the frantic noise of the gambling, laughing, bartering crowd. As I could not pay an entrance fee I had to go home before the gate was locked. Generally I found all in bed, and continued my studies by the light of a tallow candle stuck in a broken candlestick, while the sleeping inmates of the room accompanied my recital—for I always read aloud—with a snoring duet or terzet, without my interfering with their sleep or they with my reading. I allowed myself but very little sleep at that time, for in the early morning I had to give a lesson next door to the son of Mr. Rosner, the owner of a coffee-house, for which I received every day a mug of coffee and two little rolls. Two rolls, and my ferocious hunger! What a contrast! I could easily have demolished half a dozen, and I had earned them too; but man, whether the owner of a coffee-shop or of a rich gold-mine, always seeks to make all he can out of the wretchedness of his fellow-creatures, and this sad truth I had to realise very early.

At last the weary time of waiting came to an end and I was released from my uncomfortable position. After several afternoons spent on the rack at the Café Orczy, my deliverer, the agent Mayer, succeeded in getting me an appointment with the wealthy Schweiger family in Kecskemét, where I was well paid, well cared for, but was also hard worked. Here I spent a year profitably. I had to

teach for eight or nine hours daily; two or three hours were spent over toilet and meals, and when I add that my private studies occupied at least six hours a day, one sees how little time I could afford to give to rest, and how very few were the pleasures in which, at that period of the never-returning spring of life, I was able to indulge. And yet I am told that in those days I was always bright and merry, sometimes even quite reckless and extravagant in my mirth—a characteristic which did not agree well with my position of tutor. My pupils, who were only three or four years younger than myself, made good progress in their studies, but their education left much to be desired. In Kecskemét, where I had more money at my disposal than ever before, and where I was able to procure the expensive books necessary for the study of Oriental languages, I made Turkish and Arabic my chief objects of study. At that time Professor Ballagi lived in that neighbourhood, and he lent me Arabic books. Thus I was able, assisted by my knowledge of Hebrew, to make rapid progress in the second Semitic language, and by the help of Arabic also to perfect myself in Turkish. The strange characters, the difficulty of learning to read, and the want of dictionaries, which were too expensive for me to buy, were terrible obstacles in my way; often I was almost driven to distraction, and the hours spent in the shady little Protestant churchyard of Kecskemét, where I loved to linger

near the grave of two lovers, will ever remain in my memory.

The reason of my being only one year with the family Schweiger I cannot quite remember. Enough to say that I returned again to Pest, that I once more occupied the seat of disgrace in the Café Orczy, and went from there to the Puszta Csëv, not far from Monor, to a Mr. Schauengel, where I stayed only six months, fortunately in the spring and summer; for life in a lonely house on the Puszta (Heath), notwithstanding my love of solitude, soon became too much for me, and the terrible monotony of the scenery made me almost melancholy. Here I had the first foretaste of the Steppe regions of Central Asia, afterwards to be the scenes of my adventurous travels. On the Puszta itself no tree was to be seen for miles round, and when in the afternoons I wanted to read out of doors, the only shade I could find against the scorching sun of the hot summer months was under a haycock or straw-rick. Exhausted with the hard study of the *Orientalia*, I used to indulge here in my favourite reading of the *Odyssey*, for I had meanwhile also learned Greek. Stretched out on the grass I recited aloud the glorious scenes and wonderful stories, and never noticed the shepherd who was grazing his flock in the neighbourhood, standing before me, both hands leaning on his staff, and listening in breathless attention to the strange sounds, half admiring, half pitying me; for on the

Pusztá they all thought I was possessed of the devil—a man who had learned far too much, lost his reason, and now talked nonsense. When in my lonely walks I stood still and gazed into the far distance, these simple children of nature used to look at me with a kind of reverence and awe; sometimes they avoided me, and only the most daring of them ventured to approach and question me as to a lost head of cattle or about the weather. My fame as an eccentric spread over the whole neighbourhood, and to this I owed my invitation to the house of Mr. Karl Balla, the owner of the neighbouring Pusztá Pot-Haraszti, and late director of the prison of the Pest county. Herr Balla, an elderly, humane, and amiable man, a passionate meteorologist, who had on his Pusztá erected high poles with weathercocks, had also the reputation of being an eccentric. Like seeks like; a mutual friendship grew up between us, and when he proposed to me to come and spend the winter at his house and instruct his son Zádor in French and English, I gladly accepted, the more so as Mr. Schauengel intended to send his children to town for the winter, and I should therefore again have been out of a place.

As far as the personality of my principal was concerned, my residence at Pot-Haraszti promised to be very pleasant indeed. I had a quiet, large room looking into the garden, the food was excellent, my teaching duties only occupied a few hours

of the day, and I had plenty of time and leisure to devote to the study of the Oriental languages, more especially Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. The latter had a particularly magic influence upon me at that time, and the literary treasures which I found in a *Chrestomathy* of Vullers filled me with an ecstasy of delight. Sadi, Jámí, and Khakani were ideals to which I gladly sacrificed many a night's sleep and many a drive. Unfortunately the family of Herr Balla had not attained to the same degree of culture as the *paterfamilias*. The lady of the house could never bear the idea that a Jew was occupying the position of prefect in her house, and her constant sneering at my origin and my want of gentlemanly manners necessarily undermined my authority over my pupils; there were unpleasant scenes every day, and when these gave rise to family quarrels—for the old gentleman always firmly took my side—I made up my mind, though with a heavy heart, to leave this spot so favourable to my studies, and went to Pest, where, after waiting six months, I obtained an equally good position at Csetény, in the county of Veszprém, with Mr. Grünfeld, who rented the place.

This was my last position as private tutor in Hungary, and the kind treatment which I received from the generous and noble-minded Grünfeld family has also left the most vivid and pleasant recollections of my varied and sometimes very

difficult pedagogic career. Only one sad circumstance is connected with my sojourn in this quiet village in the Bakony, and it has left its ineffaceable traces on my memory. It was on the 11th of November, 1856, on a rainy evening that, after remaining in the family circle in pleasant conversation till ten o'clock, I was just about to retire to my room, which was outside in the court. As I opened the front door I saw to my horror a number of masked people before me, one of whom took me by the chest and threw me with force back into the room, while the others stormed in after him, each of them taking hold of a member of the panic-stricken family, threatening to kill any one who dared to utter a sound. It was a band of robbers who had come over from the neighbouring Bakony Forest. They had watched their opportunity to attack Mr. Grünfeld, who had returned the day before with a considerable sum of money from the Pest Market. Lying on the floor with one of those ruffians kneeling on my chest and the barrel of the pistol wet with the rain pressed to my forehead, I gradually recovered my senses. The sight of that dim, lamplighted scene, with the ghastly faces of the terror-stricken family, has stamped itself for ever on my memory like some dreadful dream.

Still more terrible scenes followed. We were dragged from one room to the other, and while the servants of the house stood bound outside, sighing

and groaning, Mr. Grünfeld was requested to give up all his effects and money. He was robbed of about 20,000 florins ; but as this did not satisfy the rapacity of those wild fellows, and one of them pointed the barrel of his gun to the breast of the father of the family, I lost all patience, jumped up, and placing the weapon on my own breast I cried, "If you must kill, kill me ; I have neither wife nor child, it is better that I should die." These words seemed to make an impression on the leader of the band, probably a political fugitive who had retired into the forest to escape the vengeance of the Austrian Government, for at a sign from him his accomplices refrained from shedding blood. They collected all the money and valuables, and after searching my room also, but only depriving me of some volumes of Hungarian classics, they went away, leaving us all locked up in the dark room.

This ghastly nocturnal scene might have had serious consequences for me, for the police of the district of Zircz, to which Csetény belonged, came upon the bright idea of suspecting me—who even at that time as a Hungarian scholar was in touch with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences—to be a secret accomplice of this robber band of fugitive rebels ; and they were strengthened in their suspicion by the fact that I had opened the door, and, with the exception of the books, had escaped without loss. A zealous anti-Magyar even went so far

as to suggest that it would be wise to take me into custody, and await my trial. I should certainly have been locked up and treated for months like any common criminal, if my good friend Mr. Grünfeld had not answered for me and affirmed my innocence. Instead of going to the sunny Levant, I might have been shut up in prison without any fault of mine.

This sojourn with the Grünfeld family concluded my career as private tutor. All my thoughts were now fixed upon the idea of accomplishing something definite, something more in keeping with all my previous studies, and no longer running wildly after chimeras. I therefore made up my mind to go to the East at once, and though it cost me much to leave the peaceful haven of rest and comfort, I took the necessary steps to set out on my travels. The last link with the land of my birth was broken, for my mother, whom I dearly loved, died shortly before my departure. My name was the last word that passed her lips, and her death left me absolutely alone, with no one to care for me in all the world.

Before concluding this chapter of my career as private tutor, I must not forget to mention that these six years were the most productive of all my life and formed the nucleus of all my future actions. Looking back upon the many vicissitudes of my early life, the long chain of incredible privations, and the insatiable desire for knowledge, I must

confess with sorrow that my labour would have been far more profitable and beneficial if I had not been led astray by my rare power of memory and an innate talent for languages and conversation ; if, instead of blindly rushing forward regardless of obstacles, I had worked more quietly, more leisurely, and more thoroughly. I had an immense number of foreign languages in my head. I could say by heart long passages from the *Parnasso Italiano*, Byron, Pushkin, Tegner, and Saadi. I could speak fluently and write moderately well in several of these languages ; yet my learning was absolutely without system or method, and it was not until I had had actual intercourse with the various nations and had paid the penalty of my many shortcomings and erroneous notions, that I could rejoice in having attained a certain degree of perfection. It is chiefly due to this haste and eagerness to get on that in the course of my later studies I always preferred a wide field of action to great depth, and always set my mind rather on expansion than on penetration.

Nor will I hide the fact that, in spite of want and distress, in spite of poverty and loneliness, a great longing for the pleasures and dissipations of youth often possessed me, and that in order to avoid useless waste of time I had to keep a very strict watch, and often had to reprimand and punish myself. For many years I used to spend New Year's Eve in solitude to

give an account to myself of all I had done in the past twelve months, and to write out and seal the programme for the new year; and when I opened this on the following 31st of December and saw that some one or other point had remained unaccomplished, I wrote bitter reproaches on the margin as reminders, and was out of sorts for days. Besides this, I had my daily calendar, marked with the rubrics for different subjects of study, which had to be attended to before going to sleep. If by chance one or other of these rubrics had not been filled in, I tried to make up for it the next day, and when I could not manage that I punished myself by absenting myself from the table under the pretext of a headache or indigestion. With my healthy appetite this was the severest punishment I could think of, and the irritating clatter of plates and knives and forks from the adjoining dining-room was indeed a sore temptation.

Now I can smile over this self-chastisement; but he who has to fight by himself the battle of youthful folly may easily fall a victim to thoughtlessness. The eye becomes dazzled by the rosy, smiling picture of the present, and gets weary of looking into the future.

My young readers, who enter the school of life guided by the admonitions of parents or teachers, do not realise perhaps how beneficial and useful these disagreeable-sounding corrections may be some day. They are the stars that twinkle in the perilous dark-

ness of youthful eagerness. I missed these helps, and I must call myself fortunate that a kind Providence spared me the sad consequences of this want.

My First Journey to the East



CHAPTER IV

MY FIRST JOURNEY TO THE EAST

FROM the little foretaste which my theoretical studies had given me of the immense depths of delight contained in Oriental literature, it had become quite clear to me that in order fully to understand and appreciate this strange and wonderful world it would be absolutely necessary to have a more intimate knowledge of the land and its bizarre inhabitants. When I was still in Kecs-kemét I had been planning a journey to the East, and since that time the enchanting pictures which the Oriental poets conjured up had ever been before my eyes. But how could I, devoid of all means, and scarcely able to procure the bare necessities of life—how could I possibly dream of undertaking a journey which at that time was very expensive? I pondered in vain. But now I had saved 120 florins from my last salary as tutor. I was thoroughly weary of teaching, and possessed by a wild desire for adventure. The time seemed come at last to carry out my ambitious plans. I deter-

mined to start for Constantinople *viâ* Galatz as soon as ever I could get ready. The means at my disposal would cover only half of my travelling expenses, and arrived in Constantinople I should be penniless, without recommendation, without friends, an utter stranger, with nothing but starvation before me. But none of these things troubled me, nor did I worry myself about the possible issue of my hazardous scheme. The glorious Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, the slender minarets, the stately cupolas of the mosques, the turbaned Turks, and closely veiled Turkish women, and many other marvels which I was about to behold, had entirely captivated my imagination, and I had no thought left for the prosaic details of travelling preparations and expenses, and the care for daily food. "I shall manage somehow," I said to myself, and the only thing that caused me some uneasiness was how to get a passport from the Austrian authorities. Just then they were always very suspicious of any one going to Turkey, for it was the favourite resort of Hungarian emigrants, and it was thought in Vienna that rebellious schemes were being hatched there. Without protection I could do nothing, and by good fortune the Baron Joseph Eötvös came to my rescue. I had made the acquaintance of this noble-minded, highly-cultured countryman of mine some little time before. He, the distinguished and kind-hearted author and scientist, having accidentally heard of me, had expressed a wish to make my

personal acquaintance. I was then in great want and distress. My foot covering was in a very dilapidated condition, the soles of my shoes were in holes, and as I did not like to come into the room from the dirty street in the rags which covered my feet I tied pasteboard soles under my shoes. In spite of this precaution my feet left unmistakable traces on the carpet, much to the annoyance of the servants, no doubt, but the noble baron only smiled at my discomfiture; he set me at my ease and questioned me as to what had induced me to take up the study of philology. He promised me his protection and also gave me an introduction to the Academy library, so that I could borrow books, which was of great service to me in my studies. When I spoke to him about the passport he managed, not without a good deal of trouble, to influence in my favour the then Governor, a man highly esteemed in Government circles. The noble baron even went so far as to start a collection for my benefit, but this failed, and when I took leave of him, although not rich himself, he gave me some money and clothes, requesting me to let him have news of me from time to time.

Provided with the necessary legal documents, I soon after packed up my dictionaries, a few favourite authors, and some underclothes, and was ready to start. Again at the recommendation of Baron Eötvös I was provided with a ticket to Galatz at half price, and I went on board one fine

morning in the month of May, 1857, to enter the "land of romance," as Wieland calls it in his *Oberon*, with no one to see me off, no one to weep, no one to grieve over me. The reader will easily imagine the joyful exultation and rapturous delight which filled my whole being. As my little stock of ready money had considerably diminished during the prolonged delay, I had only taken a second-class ticket. All day I remained on deck, entering into conversation with my fellow-travellers, old and young, great and small, and of many different nationalities; and as I could address them all in their mother-tongue my versatility called forth much admiration, which sometimes expressed itself in the offer of a drink, sometimes in an invitation to share a modest repast, which I always gladly accepted. After a good meal my hilarity generally rose a few degrees, and in this agreeable state of mind I was always pleased to recite some beautiful passage or other from one of my favourite authors, and especially from Petrarch's *Sonnets*. It was with the "Hermit of Vacluse" that I first gained the favour of the Italian ship's cook, who invited me to sit down by his kitchen door, and while I was gaily declaiming outside, the poetically inclined cook inside stirred his pans with all the more vigour, and an occasional bravo! or *ben fatto!* for my benefit. Of course the practical tokens of his favour were not wanting, for Mr. Cook handed me from time to time a plateful of the best food

his kitchen could produce. Thus I lived in plenty and comfort, and often had to confess to myself that my adventurous sail to the East had with this passage of the Danube commenced under the very best auspices. I was particularly fascinated by the variety of nationalities around me. For the first time in my life the narrow limits of a ship afforded me the opportunity of conversing with representatives of so many different nations, that I could now at pleasure put into practice my theoretical and letter knowledge; and although my queer pronunciation and faulty accentuation often made it difficult for the foreigners to understand me, I very soon learned to understand them, and after a while I was surprised to find how smoothly and fluently the conversation went along. When at Widdin I first saw real live Turks, and my surprise and astonishment knew no bounds. My first acquaintance with a Mussulman was of special interest. It was evening, the sun was going down, and its last rays shone on the deck swarming with natives from Servia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. A venerable follower of the Prophet stepped forth, spread his carpet in a corner of the deck, and began to perform his "Akhsham Namazi," *i.e.*, evening devotions. The sight of this old man prostrating himself in all humility and contrition of heart, with his head bent low, and arms limply stretched out in front of him, made a deep impression upon me. I never took my eyes off him, and when he rose from

his prayers and rolled up his carpet, I came forward and addressed him. I was pleased to find that he was willing to talk to me ; he told me that his name was Mehemed Aga and that he came from Lofcha. He was now on his way to Stambul to visit his son Djewdet Effendi, who was studying there, and who afterwards became known as Historiographer and Minister of Justice. From Stambul he intended to go on to Mecca. The name "Madjar" (Hungarian) stood at that time in good repute with the Turks, who had interested themselves for the emigrating Hungarians ; and when I had shown the dear old man my Turkish reading book, a religious work entitled *Kyrk Sual* (the Forty Questions), and had read something aloud out of it, his confidence increased, he invited me to supper, and throughout the voyage proved himself a good, kind friend to me.

Other acquaintances of a similar nature helped to clear away the black clouds which darkened the horizon of my future in the strange land. The sail up the Danube as far as Galatz soon came to an end, and I was fortunate enough to secure a half deck-ticket on one of the Lloyd steamers. I was supremely happy, as now for the first time in my life I should see the briny ocean, so familiar to me from the descriptions of Byron and Tegner and other master poets ; and when I beheld its mighty grandeur I was almost giddy with delight and admiration. In order to watch the motion of the waves more closely I stationed

myself, with permission of the sailors, on a projection near to the bowsprit, and I imagined I was riding a dolphin, with the salt waves splashing round me. Thus I accomplished the first few miles on the dark waters of the Pontus Euxinus. I literally bathed in a sea of delight. I sang, I shouted in my exultation, and until far into the night my voice vied with the seagulls and the clamour of the ship's crew behind me. At last, nearly soaked through with the spray, I left my perch and retired to a corner of the deck which the Turks had taken possession of, and soon fell fast asleep. About midnight I was roused by the jerky motion of the ship, and got up. The howling of the wind, the creaking of the planks, the jolting and bumping of the vessel, the sighs and groans of the passengers, and especially of the Turkish women, soon made me realise that I was to have the good fortune of witnessing the terrible majesty of the Euxine in a real storm. Regardless of the consternation round me, the fright, the lamentations, the cries, and the general confusion, I steered my way along the pitch-dark deck, and was beside myself with joy when an occasional flash of lightning gave me a sight of the awful spectacle around, and the black waves towering high above us. Oh! the horror and the delight of it! My dearest wishes were realised, and as I stood leaning against the railing which separated our quarter from the deck of the first-class passengers, and in my

rapturous excitement began to declaim a few stanzas from the *Henriade*, I noticed that a traveller, pacing up and down on the other side, occasionally stopped to listen ; and after a while he shouted to me in French, "Who are you ; what makes you think of the *Henriade* just now?" After a little conversation I found that I was talking to the Secretary of the Belgian Legation at Constantinople. The next morning he talked for a long time with me, and finally asked me to come and see him at Pera.

Needless to say I was deeply impressed by the entrance of the Bosphorus, and it was not until the ship had cast anchor at the Golden Horn opposite Galata, and the passengers crowding into the boats had gone ashore, that I awoke from my dreams and began to realise my critical position. I had only just enough money in my pocket to pay for the ferryboat, without the slightest idea where to go or what to do. There I stood, penniless, in an utterly strange town. As far as I can remember I was about two hours climbing up the steep incline between Galata and Pera. I was so fascinated by the absolute grotesqueness of the life around me, the chaos of languages, gaudy costumes and strange physiognomies, that I was obliged to stop every few minutes, rooted, as it were, to the spot. Pushed on all sides, I felt myself suddenly seized by the shoulder, and some one addressed me first in Italian and then in Hungarian. I stood face to face with

Mr. Püspöki, my countryman and an emigrant. My Hungarian hat with the flying ribbons had attracted his attention, and he began to question me as to the aim and object of my journey. "Ah, perhaps you are the philologer of whose journey to the East we have read in the Hungarian papers?" "Yes," I answered; "and since you are the first countryman I have met, you must help me to find a lodging and work to do." The good man looked at me with surprise; he seemed to have guessed the emptiness of my pocket, and in order not to raise my hopes too high he told me that he was not doing very well himself, and that just at present he was looking for a cook's place, and would gladly share his modest quarters with me. Talking about the beloved fatherland, the absolutism of the Austrians, and the miserable condition of Turkey, he led me through a labyrinth of dirty, narrow passages to his abode behind the wall of the English Embassy. This dwelling consisted of one bare room, with broken windows, and as its only furniture a long, torn, Turkish divan, which he pulled forward, inviting me to sit down. "Half of it is mine, and the other yours," said kind-hearted Mr. Püspöki; "and as for food, I will show you a *locanda* (eating-house), where, if you happen to have cash, you can get a good meal very reasonably." He took me to a basement place in what is now the Grande Rue de Pera, and which bore the pompous title of "Café Flamm de Vienne." They sold

café-au-lait and Vienna rolls, quite a novelty for the East in those days. Here I found other compatriots lounging about, some in Turkish military uniform, some in threadbare clothes. The majority gave me a hearty welcome, but a few eyed me suspiciously, for just then the emigrants dreaded to find in every fresh arrival from Hungary an Austrian spy, sent over to report about them to the authorities. However, the harmlessness of my personality soon reassured them, and all suspicions were allayed when they found that I could read Turkish and speak it a little as well. Some of them invited me to breakfast straight away, to which meal I did full justice.

After the conclusion of the Crimean War this Café Flamm had become the favourite haunt of disillusioned adventurers, officers out of employ, bankrupt merchants, despairing emigrants, political enthusiasts, and heroes of all trades and nationalities. To judge from the conversation of these almost always hungry gentlemen, the fate of Europe and of Turkey was to be decided in this dingy, smoky parlour; they played ball with Sovereigns and Ministers of State to their hearts' content; they all had their own plans and views for the amelioration of the world, and each of them secretly believed that it was merely a question of time for him to get to the head of affairs in Turkey. The modern Argonaut expedition of united Europe to the northern banks of the Euxine had created during

.

and since the Crimean War quite a marvellous host of knights of the Golden Fleece, and had opened the romantic East to the romantic children of the West. The tailor's apprentice is in this "Foreign Legion" suddenly promoted to be a first lieutenant or captain; hotel waiters become secretaries and interpreters; journalists blossom forth as great strategists, financiers, and diplomatists; ensigns are for the nonce colonels and generals; and when, after the violent attack on the Malakoff, the angel of peace appeared on the banks of the Seine, vanished was the glitter of the golden existence in the Golden Horn; the heroes, one and all, subsided into their former insignificance, and met at the Café Flamm to sweeten the bitter bread of sad reality by the concoction of still more high-flown plans for the future. The various types I saw in this coffee-house and the hours spent there will ever remain fresh in my memory.

In this manner the first days of my sojourn in Pera passed away. I traversed in all directions both the European and the Turkish quarters of the town, and always liked to enter into conversation with the Turks lounging in the coffee-houses; I read aloud from the Turkish books I always carried about with me, and noticed that the Mohammedans, easily influenced and affable folks, were impressed by my knowledge of Turkish and Persian, and regarded me as a kind of prodigy who, having arrived in Stambul only a day or two ago, already spoke Turkish

like an Effendi. On account of the great difference between the language of the educated classes and of the people, those who speak the former are always treated with a certain amount of respect, especially if they are unbelievers ; and as at that time the sympathies of the Turks for the Hungarians had reached their height, the kindness of these good Osmanli seemed quite natural to me ; and when in any of the coffee-houses I read aloud passages from "Ashik Garib" ("The Amorous Foreigner"), or from another popular poem, with the right accentuation and modulation, I generally reaped a rich harvest of bread, cheese, and coffee, sometimes even Kebab (roast beef) or Pilaf and Pastirma (dry, smoked meat). At night I availed myself of Mr. Püspöki's hospitality, and slept excellently on my miserable couch, in spite of the fiendish noise of the rats racing about in the room. Their presence was at first rather objectionable to me, as they gnawed my boots and my clothes, but afterwards, when the necessary precautions had been taken, I did not trouble any more about them. Favoured by fine weather, in the charm of novelty the first six weeks of my stay in Constantinople passed away pleasantly. I never knew in the morning where I should eat in the evening : the future did not trouble me in the least ; and as I had now changed my hat for a fez, and looked shabby enough to pass for a wandering lecturer, I spent my days enjoying to the full my vagabond life.

The mixed nationalities that I came into contact with on the banks of the Bosphorus, were exactly what I needed to complete my theoretical knowledge of their languages, and ear and memory stood each other in good stead. I soon acquired the correct accent and construction; and imitating the different languages as closely as I could in tone and sound, many took me for a native, and the jokes and jests caused by this muddle of languages gave me many a delicious moment. Unfortunately my happiness was somewhat marred by the sudden departure of Mr. Püspöki, who had found employment as cook on one of the steamers of the Messageries Impériales, for this made me lose my night quarters, and I had to hunt about for a long time, until at last the secretary of the Hungarian Association — Magyar Egylet — proposed that I should take up my quarters in the council-room of the Society, which was likely soon to be dissolved. In this large, empty hall I found an old sofa, on which I stretched myself, but the evenings were cool and I could not sleep. So I begged Mr. Frecskay, which was the secretary's name, to give me a wrap of some kind. The good-hearted man appeared presently with a torn tricolor in his hand, handed it to me with grave pathos, and said, "I have nothing but this precious memento of our glorious struggle. This flag has sent the fire of enthusiasm into the lines of our fighters for justice and freedom; cover yourself with it, it will warm you also." Of

course I could not continue to sleep there, so I set off once more in search of a bed, and soon found help in the person of another compatriot, Major E. This man had unfortunately lost his watchdog, and as his wife would not be left alone in the lonely house near Hassköi, he invited me to take up my abode there while he was away on business in the provinces, and until he had procured another watchdog. So I was to occupy the vacant position of watchdog! It was not particularly inviting; but turned out rather better than I expected. Instead of a dog-kennel I had a comfortable room, and plenty of coffee and bread for breakfast. So I contented myself with the exchange, and continued my old Bohemian life.

The mornings were chiefly devoted to reading Turkish books, then I cleaned out the yard and fetched water from the well some little distance off, and towards evening I repaired to different coffee-houses to gain a piaster or two by reciting familiar love-poems. No sooner was I seated there on a high stool surrounded by Turks and Armenians, and had begun to recite in a nasal sing-song tone, when the conversation gradually dropped, and the rattling of the nargiles began to subside. They listened to the love-sick lamentations of Wamik and Esra, of Khossru and Shirin, where the sad fate of the lovers is recounted. My readings and recitations were generally attended by the manifestations of violent emotion or admiration on the part of my

audience. In my subsequent travels in Persia I have often experienced the same thing ; and even now, when I think of those times, the spell of the scene comes over me again, and I revel in the memory of those early days, when I could gain the ear of those regular Orientals and keep the crowds spellbound. Truly speech, the spoken word, is a mighty instrument ! By it mountains are levelled and hearts hard as rock are softened. Differences of faith and nationality vanish before it ; and as I had the good fortune to experience all this at the very outset of my adventurous career in Asia, many dark outlines of the far-off future were smoothed away.

Thus the days passed swiftly until the approach of autumn, when I began to realise the seriousness of my condition, and once more I made up my mind to try to get lessons or a permanent appointment as private tutor, in order to make a decent living. In the East bombastic speeches and high-flown announcements are not at all a rarity ; nevertheless the advertisement which I had fixed up in all the booksellers' shops in Pera, and in which I offered myself as teacher of a whole string of Western and Eastern languages, attracted much attention. Bizarre, absurd, and fantastic as my advertisement was, it did not fail in its object, for before long I was summoned by a Turk in Scutari, and a Mr. von Hübsch, General-Consul of Denmark. The former had just come in for a large sum of money, and in order to do justice to his

position of modern dandy wanted to be able to talk a little French. He wished to take French lessons from me, while the latter, an Easterling by birth, wanted to learn Danish, not so much for conversation, he thought, but rather to be able to read the Danish Court circular and newspapers. Here was a singular and rather perplexing demand upon my Scandinavian studies ; in my wildest dreams it had never entered my brain that I might be called upon to teach a representative of Denmark the language of that country ! And yet such was the case. For eighteen months Mr. v. Hübsch continued my pupil, and when, at the end of that time, we had finished Andersen's novel *Kun ã Spilleman* ("Only a Fiddler"), and he could read the *Berlinske Tidninger*, I came to the conclusion that there is nothing impossible in this world, and that an adventurous career certainly brings the oddest experiences. I did not get on so well with my Turkish scholar. As a man of fashion his object was merely to have a French *maître* coming to the house, but he was lazy and frivolous, and all the learning that was done was on my side ; for in his house at Chamlidjia, on the hill above Scutari, he always entertained a company of Effendis and Porte officials in the evenings, with whom I conversed for hours, and made rapid progress both in Turkish society manners and customs, and in the elegancies of the Osmanli speech. The distance between the landing-stage at Scutari and Chamlid-

jia was a weary journey to accomplish every day on foot, but it was a *gradus ad Parnassum*, and after being in office for three months I could act the Effendi not only in outward appearance, manners, and gesticulations, but I could hold a conversation in Turkish with all the necessary elegance, and was well on the way to becoming a perfect Effendi.

The Turks of the upper classes are very pleasant people, especially when one humours their peculiarities, and takes the trouble to learn their language, one of the most difficult in the world. No wonder, therefore, that my circle of acquaintances perceptibly increased, and that I had constantly fresh applications and fresh invitations as teacher of languages. Thus far I had made Pera my headquarters, but when, through the intervention of my countryman, Ismail Pasha (General Kmetty), I was offered the position of private tutor in the Konak of the Hussain Daim Pasha, in the town-quarter of Kabatash, I accepted at once, adjourned to the Turkish quarter, and henceforth became a regular Turk. Only the name was wanting now, and this was given me by my principal, a worthy Cherkess, who had been educated at the court of Sultan Mahmud; he ordered his household henceforth to address me as *Reshid*, i.e., the valiant, the honest one; and on the strength of my linguistic skill to give me the title of Effendi. So Reshid Effendi was my official name, but neither the Pasha nor myself had ever thought of a regular Islamising.

The former, a Mohammedan of the purest water, who afterwards became involved in an anti-reform conspiracy, thought no doubt that my conversion would follow as a matter of course, and that, when fully convinced of the material advantages to be derived from joining the ruling class altogether, I should give up all idea of returning to the West. As for myself, the very idea of conversion was far from me. I had long been a confirmed freethinker, and Islam seemed to open a religious world which, because of its sound foundation and rational dogmas, was all the more dangerous to the free soaring upward of the spirit; but with my declared animosity against positive religions in general, it was altogether beyond me to embrace it. At the same time I must admit that the forbearance of the upper classes in the Turkish metropolis was most praiseworthy; for most of them saw perfectly well through the hypocritical nature not only of my Moslemism but of that of other European renegades, and did not pin the slightest faith to the conversion of Europeans; they never in any way, however, disapproved of this incognito, or resented the mere external acknowledgment of the newly adopted faith. In this the better classes of Turkey have always advantageously distinguished themselves from the *soi-disant* cultured classes of European society; for while these latter high-born gentlemen, brought up in the trammels of prejudice, short-sightedness, and hypocrisy, presuppose in

their converts the same lack of inner persuasion, and consider conversion to their views quite a possible thing, the cultured Turk, be he ever so religious, recognises in Islam a world of thought, born and bred in the blood, dependent upon education and mental development, and absolutely impossible of adoption by a man of Western training. They called me Reshid Effendi, they permitted me to be present at and to join in their religious ceremonies, they discussed in my presence frankly and unreservedly the most abstruse religious questions, they even brought me in contact with the friars, and laughed when I joined in the recitation of hymns, or took part in their disputes ; but the question whether I really intended to become a Mohammedan, to marry, and to live the life of a regular Moslem, nobody ever thought of asking ; that question has been put to me only by the uneducated.

In this manner I was enabled to move in Turkish society as Reshid Effendi without in any way binding myself. The more I became familiar with their social customs, and steeped in the Oriental ways of living and thinking, the larger grew my circle of acquaintances, and the more unreservedly all doors were opened to me, not merely of lower officials but of the higher and even the very highest dignitaries. Turkey knows no aristocracy of birth ; the man of obscure origin can suddenly become Marshal and Grand-Vizier ; and since most of them, as self-made

men, have no genealogical scruples, so also in the foreigner they do not so much consider his antecedents as his personal capabilities ; and as my fame as professor of the Turkish language spread, I found the doors of the highest society open to me, and in a year's time, I was, with the exception of Murad Effendi (Werner), who lived in the house of Kibrisli Pasha, the only European who, without formally going over to Islam, had become an Effendi and a *protégé* of the Porte circle. Easy as this transformation had been, because of the tolerance of the better classes of Stambul, so much the greater had been the sacrifices which the lower classes demanded from me. Servants play an important part in Turkish households ; they are looked upon as members of the family, and in the patriarchal organisation of the house they have a considerable influence upon the Effendi and Pasha, and especially upon the children. These servants, transported from the interior of European and Asiatic Turkey to the banks of the Bosphorus, are generally in the very lowest stage of education ; they are extremely fanatical and suspicious as regards Europeans, and the higher I rose in the favour of the master of the house the higher rose their jealousy and animosity. They could not understand that, notwithstanding my literary and religious knowledge, I did not become a pious Moslem, and why the Pasha, Bey, or Effendi should show me, the disguised Giaour, so much attention. In spite of all that both religion and

national custom prescribe as to the kind treatment of guests, for the Koran says, "Ekremu ed dhaifun ve lau kana kafirun," *i.e.*, "Honour the guest, even if he be an unbeliever," I had much unkindness to bear, and had to put up with many a humiliation. What amused me most was the conduct of the older house-servants; they even played the Mentor towards the governor, his wife, and his children, and often instructed me in rules of etiquette and general views of life. In the eyes of these people infidel Europe was a barbarian wilderness, rejecting the civilising influences of Islam, and it was an act of condescension on the part of the old-stock Turk, brought up within the small Stambul circle, to put me right, and to instruct me in the correct way of sitting, walking, eating, talking, and general comportment. Others, again, were malevolent and fanatical, made me the butt of their ill-chosen jokes, worried me, and once it even happened that a scoundrel, who had risen to be the tyrant of the house, threw his boot at my head because I had not polished it enough to his liking. I had to take all this into the bargain; it was a new school—the school of Oriental life—which I had to pass through, and the fee had to be paid.

After the servants it was the harem, *i.e.*, the Turkish female world, which caused me a good deal of trouble. Turkish women, the fair sex in general, are distinctly conservative, and they could not understand how the Pasha or Effendi could

tolerate the presence of a Giaour in the Selamlık, *i.e.*, in close proximity to the harem, and above all, how he could have come upon the idea of entrusting the education of his children to an infidel. Even now Turkish ladies are much more fanatical than the men; but at that time, the beginning of the reform period, they evinced an ungovernable hatred and aversion against everything Christian. They showed me their dislike in all sorts of teasing ways. Communication between the harem and the outer world is carried on by means of the Dolab, a round, revolving sort of cupboard. Everything intended for the Selamlık is placed in this Dolab, and when the women want to speak with any one outside they do so through the Dolab. When I heard the sound of a woman's voice, and shouted the customary "Buyurun" ("At your service") into the Dolab, I either received no answer at all or else some rude rejoinder; and it was not till later, when I had trained myself to make exquisitely polite speeches and poetic compliments, that they vouchsafed to give me a short answer. After months of effort I succeeded at last in breaking the ice. My youthful fire could not fail to take effect, and the ladies, most of them very beautiful Circassians, who were much neglected by the old invalid master of the house, gradually began to praise my willingness to oblige them and my linguistic proficiency, and proofs of their favour were also forthcoming. In six months' time the

Böyük Hanim (chief wife) entrusted me with the charge of one of the Odalisks, long past the spring of life, who suffered from severe toothache, and had to be taken to a dentist at Pera. The long and difficult road up the steep incline to Pera necessitated a rest midway, and with the afflicted lady I stopped at the house of a Hungarian countryman of mine. The kind hospitality she met with seemed to have pleased the Turkish woman extremely, for soon afterwards more ladies of the harem, some of them quite young, were suddenly seized with toothache, and I had to take them in turns to Pera for dental operations. My intercourse with the inmates of the harem was very strained ; it was so difficult to keep to the strict rules of etiquette. I could not accustom myself to cast down my eyes when in the presence of a lady, as Turkish custom demands. It is no small matter at twenty-four to tear one's gaze away from the fiery orbs of a beautiful Circassian. There were other difficulties which it cost me much trouble to overcome.

But, true to my principle to persevere and to bear all things, and hardened by early sufferings, I found strength to pursue the end I had in view. Rising, step by step, I first came into the house of the Chief Chancellor of the Imperial Divan, Afif Bey, whose son-in-law, Kiamil Bey, I taught for about twelve months, and where I had daily intercourse with the *élite* of Porte society. Our house,

opposite the mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud II., not far from the High Porte, was the rendezvous of men of wit and genius, celebrated authors, and high society generally. Here I made the acquaintance of Midhat Pasha, afterwards celebrated in Europe as the father of the Turkish constitution. He was then Midhat Effendi, and occupied the position of secretary to my Pasha. Midhat was a lively young man of a restless and fanciful turn of mind ; he was studying French at that time, and as he had not the patience, while reading, to look up words in the dictionary, he began to read with me for a few hours every day, in return for which he helped me to decipher difficult Turkish texts, as, for instance, in the historical works of Saaddesdin of Kemal-pashazade, or he corrected my compositions and introduced me into the Medrissa (college) for Osmanlis, where I was allowed to attend the lectures of celebrated exegetists, grammarians, and lawyers of the time, in company with the Softas (students of divinity). Here, crouching before the Rahle (Koran-desk) at the feet of the thickly turbaned Khodjas (teachers), I was introduced into the practical knowledge of Islam, and the instruction which my fellow-students accepted with religious enthusiasm was to me all the more interesting as, rising higher and higher in the estimation of the Turks in general, I gained possession of the talisman which has been my guide in all my subsequent journeys and wanderings. Amongst the

many Europeans who have formally gone over to Islam, I was the first to be educated at a Medresse (university), and the study seemed the easier to me as the ruling spirit here strongly reminded me of the Orthodox Jewish schools. Here, as there, discussions and disputations are carried on with great religious zeal ; they go carefully into the minutest details of ritualistic ordinances, they criticise and speak for and against ; and whoever can hold out longest with his arguments is reckoned to be the best scholar. As Muhtedi, *i.e.*, One brought to the truth, or properly, converted, they were particularly obliging to me, and all my remarks were applauded.

In the year 1859 I could take part in single disputes, and as my name was often mentioned in society, I soon received an appointment at the house of Rifaat Pasha, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, as teacher of history, geography, and French. This house not only ranked as the richest in the Turkish capital at that time, but it was also the rendezvous of Turkish *litterati*, who, as fanatical adherents to old Asiatic culture, always gave the preference to Turkish compositions and literature ; and when the young master of the house, Reouf Bey, gathered round him in the evening the celebrated Kiatibs (writers) and led the conversation to selections of Turkish authors, I literally revelled in the enjoyment of the marvellous metaphors and gems of oratory in the Osmanli language. History,

philosophy, and similar themes were not introduced into this circle, and as for politics the conversation was limited to the discussion of some elevation to a higher rank, or some official grant, on which occasions the high dignitaries then in office were always sharply criticised, for every one endeavoured to show up their faults by witty epigrams, or to prove their unfitness, corruption, and injustice in elaborate flowery language. So far the decorous evening assemblies. As for the merry gatherings, the so-called pot-evenings, of which I have spoken at large in my *Sketches of the East*, under the title of "Drinking Bouts," they were always objectionable and abominable to me, for I have never had a liking for spirituous drinks, and I have often had to sit for hours with an empty stomach, waiting until the grand gentlemen had finished intoxicating themselves with their Mastika (a kind of brandy) before the evening meal was served. The conversation on these occasions was coarse and vile in the extreme, and things were discussed freely and openly before young people which would have brought a flush of shame to the cheek in the most degraded of European society. In this it becomes apparent to the stranger of Western lands how beneficial is the influence of women on society in general, and that social amenity is incompatible with the rigorous separation of the sexes, as it is in the East, and must ultimately lead to moral corruption. To be nailed to one's chair for hours together, without

daring to move—for to show any restlessness is a breach of good manners—and to be obliged to listen to all sorts of disgusting stories, generally bearing upon sexual intercourse, and to trivial, childish, and absurd conversations, is of all things about the most terrible penance which can be inflicted upon a young, enthusiastic European striving after higher ideals. As long as the language still offered fresh charms, this torture was bearable, but afterwards these gatherings became a veritable infernal pain to me, and I was glad indeed when the winter was over and we adjourned to the summer residence on the banks of the Bosphorus, in the villa of Kanlidjia, where, at any rate, I was able to escape from the smoke-filled room and enjoy to my heart's content the fresh summer evening air on the Bosphorus, the loveliest spot on all the earth.

A prominent feature of the Oriental character is an extraordinary serenity and an easy-going, contemplative turn of mind. This same feature also evinces itself in family life. Being a stranger, I had access only to the *Selamlık*, *i.e.*, the men's part of the house, and I often felt very lonely in the daytime, and had plenty of time and leisure for my studies. The four years I spent in Turkish households were in many respects like life in a monastery, and it was not till later, when I had become acquainted with many prominent members of high society, that I could break the monotony by making

frequent calls, and bring some variety into my studies. Always welcome in one house as teacher, in another as friend and guest, I often used to spend two or three days a week outside the family where I really belonged. I had in these various houses my own *Gedjelik*, or night requisites ; also a bed at my disposal, consisting of a cover and bolster and the use of a *divan* ; and when I arrived anywhere at night it was taken for granted that I stayed the night and shared the evening meal. The hospitality of the Orientals, and especially of the Turks, is unbounded, and it is to them not only a pleasure but also a means of fulfilling one of the most sacred duties of their religion. Whether one or two more people sit down at his table makes very little difference to him, for there is always plenty to satisfy a few unexpected guests, and whether he be rich or poor, the Turk is always supremely happy when he has plenty of company at his table. But what struck me especially was the total absence of aristocratic pride and class distinction in social life. Vizier, marshal, minister, or son-in-law of the Sultan, all gave me an equally hearty reception, nobody asked after my antecedents, nobody inquired as to my circumstances, and I, who at home in the mother country had been an obscure Jewish teacher, living in absolute retirement, became now in the very short time of two years the confidential friend of the most distinguished and wealthiest dignitaries. As friend and guest initiated into all the mysteries of private

and official concerns, I soon became as learned and knowing as any Effendi born in Stambul and brought up under the Porte. Of necessity this privileged position in Turkish society brought me often in contact with European intelligence and the diplomatic circle at Pera. Besides the Austrian inter-nunciature, where Baron Schlehta, whom I knew at Vienna, introduced me, I came into contact with the Prussian, Italian, and English Embassies. At the Prussian legation I taught Turkish to Count Kayserling, and at the hotel of the English Embassy I was introduced by Count Pisani, the first interpreter, to the then powerful Lord Stratford Canning, and I often acted as interpreter to him when he paid private calls at the house of Mahmud Nedim Pasha at Bebek. This man of the iron mien was not a little astonished when he heard me, the supposed Effendi, talk English fluently. My Turkish appearance, and the fame I enjoyed among the Turks of a thorough knowledge of their language, soon became the talk of the diplomatic circles at Pera. I was invited to *soirées* and public dinners, and thus received the first impressions of the social life of the West, the rigorous etiquette and stiffness of which was, honestly speaking, very objectionable to me at first.

The free access I had to all circles of Turkish society, where even native Armenians and Greeks comported themselves with a certain amount of restraint, gave me a deeper insight into the political

and social condition of Turkey in the fifties than perhaps any other European. And this was the more interesting as it revealed the first stage of the transformation from Eastern to Western civilisation. In the house, in the school, in the harem, in religion, and in government, everywhere a partly spontaneous, partly forced change became apparent, and, alas ! it was this very first phase of the transformation which gave the thoughtful spectator but little hope as to the ultimate result of the metamorphosis, the assimilation of the East of Western ways. There was no sound basis to work upon, and the introduction of modern civilisation was forced on far too hastily, for the evident purpose of satisfying the craving impatience of the West. Wherever one looked, the eye met the deceptive, forced, and unreal evidences of the reform movement ; it was merely obedience to the word spoken from high places ; and even there, where the necessity of assimilation was acknowledged, a transition from East to West would eventually have failed. In my constant intercourse with the leading men of this movement I have often touched upon this theme, and, pointing out the tremendous difference between Asiatic and European civilisation, I have always advocated the necessity of a gradual progress, based on historical, religious and social developments.

But I was always met with the answer, " We are forcibly pushed on ; they despise our centuries of

old Oriental culture, they want to change us, like a *Deus ex machinâ*, into Europeans; if they would only give us time, our transformation would be slower, but more effectual in the end."

And now, in view of recent events in Japan, these words are explained as a mere pretext for the laziness and the spirit of procrastination of the Moslem East. The fact is lost sight of that the Shinto faith of the Japanese, never at any time prudish like Islam, has never resisted the influences of European civilisation in the same degree as the triumphant doctrine of Mohammed has done. And what is more, one cannot or will not see that the intensely autocratic government of Moslem sovereigns hinders the work of modernisation as much as the liberal institutions of Japan further it.

When I think of those nightly assemblies at the house of my Pasha, where the most varied arguments were brought forward, for and against the new movement, I am particularly struck with the struggle which was going on between self-abnegation and the forcible ignoring of all the glorious past, which was inevitably connected with an acknowledgment of the advantages of Western civilisation. No nation likes to acknowledge of itself, "All that we have is bad, and all that others have is good." The number of Turks familiar with our languages and sciences was far too small to turn the scale in favour of a more correct view of the matter, and among the few who, on account of

their modern culture, were capable of a better opinion, personal ambition and rivalry frustrated many a good proposal. Reshid Pasha, who stood at the head, was a thoroughly well-bred, fair, and patriotic man ; a statesman full of energy and perseverance, not hindered or hampered by any prejudices or prepossessions, honoured with the full confidence of his sovereign, and one who could have accomplished great things if his own pupils and assistants had not secretly opposed him, and thus frustrated many of his plans. The very able Ali Pasha, of whom Mr. Thouvenel, the ambassador of Napoleon III., said that he wrote better French than many a French diplomatist, was the paragon of Oriental intriguers and dissimulators. He was a small, weakly-looking man, with a disproportionately large head : hence his stooping posture ; and in slow, hardly audible words he used to fling out the hardest criticisms against the politics of his master and patron, without being able to improve matters. When I was of the company, either at table or in the drawing-room, he used to steal furtive glances at me, and only after he had made quite sure of my discretion and considered me harmless, used he to speak somewhat louder to those immediately around him ; but not until I had borrowed some Tchagataic books from his well-stocked library did he express himself without any restraint in my presence, in the full conviction that I, the philologist, took no interest whatever in poli-

tics. Yes, the hours spent in the villa of Kanlidjia, with the more than once Grand-Vizier and Minister of the Exterior, were most instructive to me ; they gave me the first insight into the reform movement and the life and aspirations of the officials of the higher Porte in those days.

After Ali Pasha the personality of Fuad Pasha interested me especially. This tall, stately man, with refined, thoroughly European manners, who, with his sparkling wit and humorous *aperçus*, was more like a Frenchman than a Turk, and, as was generally known, had risen from being a simple military doctor to the highest State dignity, was now one of the three first reformers. Although fair and patriotic, he does not appear to have taken his position very much in earnest. He was complacency itself, but his sarcasm did not even spare the sacred person of his sovereign ; and once, on the occasion of an illumination, when I happened to be in his suite, I heard him say, "Yes, it is light everywhere ; darkness only reigns in our State cassa."

Many of his *bon-mots* are still in circulation ; as, for instance, his remark to an inquisitive diplomatist, who, in going through the house, wanted to open the door of the harem : "Monsieur, vous n'êtes accredité qu'à la Porte—au delà vous n'avez pas de droit." It is told of him that when he was Ambassador Extraordinary at Madrid, and sat at table next to the Queen, who drew his attention to the emblem of friendship displayed on the Spanish-

Turkish flag on the ham, he said, "Madame! je reconnais volontièrement l'emblème de l'amitié — mais comme Musulman, je ne peux pas reconnaître la neutralité du terrain." In those days I managed to make quite a collection of his Turkish and French *aperçus* and poems, for he had inherited the poetic vein from his father, the celebrated Tzzet-Molla, who had had the audacity to write a satire against Sultan Mahmud, and for punishment had been banished to Köchük Tchekmedje. There he wrote his beautiful poem, "Mihnetkeshan" ("The Sorrowful"), in which the affectionate father recommends his two sons with rhyming names, Fuad and Reshad, to God's special protection. Fuad also gave his sons names that rhyme, for they were called Nazim and Kiazim. Fuad remained the lifelong, faithful friend of Ali, whose intellectual superiority he gladly acknowledged, without, however, altogether sparing him the darts of his sarcasm. Towards me Fuad Pasha was always most gracious, only he thought that my thirst for knowledge, without showing any practical results, rather resembled the craving of a hungry man for a glass of water, and he often quoted to me the Persian lines :

"Kushishi bi faide, vesme ber abruî kur,"

(*I.e.*, "It is vain labour to adorn the eye of the blind.")

Besides this trio of reformers—Reshid, Ali, Fuad—only very few have distinguished themselves since that time in the field of home and foreign

politics. The only exceptions are Mehemmed Kibrizli Pasha and Mehemmed Rushdi Pasha. The former, a Cypriote by birth, who had long been ambassador in London, was as enthusiastic about England as the latter was about France. Kibrizli's wife was an Englishwoman, and it would seem that he concluded this marriage anticipating the future annexation of his native island by the British Empire. In his politics he has given many proofs of independence, and was not nearly so amenable at court as his successor in the Grand-Vizierate. Rushdi Pasha, generally called Mütördjim (the interpreter), showed himself a Liberal even in my days, and afterwards, in concert with Midhat Pasha, took a prominent part in the dethronement of Sultan Aziz. I had access to the Konak of both, but because of my frequent attendance at the houses of Fuad and Ali they observed a certain degree of reserve with regard to me, without, however, being able to hide the tendency of the ruling spirit there. Of some importance were, even at that time, Aarifi Effendi, Safvet Effendi, and Server Effendi, who properly belonged to Ali's clique, and afterwards attained to the highest dignities. They were all zealous adherents of the reform party, fairly well advanced in Western civilisation, but none of them made of the stuff of which political leaders are formed. To the political amphibia belonged the then Minister of Finance, Hassib Pasha—a blind

tool of the court faction who allowed Sultan Abdul Medjid large sums of money far beyond the fixed Civil List; and when Fuad Pasha called him to book about this he replied, "The bank-note press was just in operation, and I thought a few millions more or less would make no difference." Then there was the War Minister, Riza Pasha, I might say, next to Fethi Pasha, the Grand Master of Artillery, the most powerful and influential man of his time, as he was related to the court, and moreover extremely rich, for he is said to have purloined enormous sums of money. Last, but not least, there was Mahmud Nedim Pasha, afterwards called Nedimoff because of his Russian sympathies. In his house I occupied for two years the position of French master to his son-in-law, slept there three nights a week, and even in those days took a dislike to this man who afterwards caused such harm to Turkey. He was a genuine specimen of the true Oriental, minus the goodly qualities which characterise the Turks. During his drinking-bouts, which lasted till long after midnight, he practised composing Sharkis (love-songs), and while he wrote down his verses under the inspiration of the Castalian Raki, his Mewlewi-Dervish had to play a suitable accompaniment on the flute. These songs were afterwards much liked by the ladies of the Imperial harem, and have probably contributed to his later influential position. As a politician he was nowhere, for his ignorance of

Western affairs was boundless; and when once I had to be interpreter on the occasion of a visit from Lord Stratford Canning to the villa at Bebek, where he was acting as substitute for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I positively blushed when I had to translate his ignorant geographical remarks about the Suez Canal—the point under discussion. No wonder that Ignatieff could afterwards so easily gain this monster over to assist Russia in the overthrow of Modern Turkey.

Besides the above, I enjoyed the confidence and hospitality of Damad Kiamil Pasha, a worthy Turk of the old stamp, immensely rich, who, notwithstanding his hesitation between West and East, applied himself in his advanced age to the study of French, and was fond of me because in his attempts to translate Fénelon's *Télémaque* I had served him instead of a dictionary. He led a contemplative life in his villa on the bay of Bebek, and took great delight in my recitations of Turkish poems.

It would lead me too far to mention all the Turkish statesmen with whom I had personal intercourse and whose friendship I enjoyed. I had also made the acquaintance of the *litterati* of the day—the historians Shinassi Effendi, Djevdet Effendi, and Khairullah Effendi, who very kindly assisted me, perhaps not so much on my own account as because of the high repute which the house of Rifat Pasha, and, later, of his son Reouf

Bey, of which I was then a member, enjoyed with the Porte. I love to think of those days. In spite of the threatening clouds of State bankruptcy and the general impoverishment, chiefly caused by the last Turko-Russian war, the Turkey of the fifties enjoyed a certain reputation in Europe; and as in our financial world the youngest member in the European Concert had received loan upon loan, Turkish society was rich, and on the strength of foreign money luxury grew apace. It was a period of childish carelessness and abandonment, in which both nation and ruler were plunged. Sultan Abdul Medjid, the true prototype of those days, was a kindly monarch, who gladly relinquished the cares of the State to his dignitaries, while he himself enjoyed all the pleasures of court life, and was a willing tool in the hands of the reform trio already mentioned, honestly trying, in outward form at any rate, to copy the European sovereigns. When at diplomatic dinners he handed his Havannah cigars to the European ambassadors, or offered his arm to a European princess who happened to be his guest, or when at solemn audiences he shook hands with the foreign representatives, he did so with all the grace of a perfect gentleman, and one could scarcely credit that only two generations ago the European ambassadors entered the audience chamber clad in a long kaftan, with a servant walking at each side of them holding their hands. His father, Sultan

Mahmud, still wore on State occasions a richly braided coat of Hungarian make, such as may still be seen among the costumes in the treasure-house. But Sultan Abdul Medjid dressed in a simple black suit made by Dusetoy in Paris, and when he appeared on horseback in the streets of the city, graciously acknowledging the greetings of the multitude with his white-gloved hand, no one would have recognised in him the earthly representative of Mohammed, the Khalif of all true believers, and the mighty autocrat of an empire still extending over three continents. In spite of all his refined manners, however, he remained the Oriental despot and autocrat. Whenever he showed himself in this light before Fuad or Ali Pasha the two statesmen made private comments about it in their own intimate circle. The Sultan's angry outbursts were faithfully reported, and once Fuad Pasha told how, when he had gently remonstrated with him in regard to advances from the public exchequer, the Sultan had accosted him with, "Am I not the true Osmanli ruler of this land, and owner of all its possessions?" Of course foreigners had not to fear such outbursts—towards strangers Abdul Medjid was always most courteous, and I like to remember the audience I once attended when, by order of the Grand-Vizier, Kibrizli Pasha, I acted as interpreter to an Englishman and an Italian, who came to offer for sale a supposed autograph letter of the Prophet, which had been found in

Upper Egypt, and for which questionable relic they received a large sum of money. The Sultan was seated at about five feet distance; he spoke in a low voice, and asked me whether all Hungarians could speak Turkish so easily. Most touching was his intercourse with Lord Stratford. He called him Baba (father), and was always willing to follow his advice.

A detailed narrative of all my experiences in Constantinople would fill several volumes. Suffice it to say that I had the satisfaction of knowing that in the diplomatic circles of Pera I was recognised as the only foreigner familiarly acquainted with the Porte and with Turkish family life. So I might well be satisfied with my lot. My income had considerably increased, and after the everlasting struggle with poverty, misery, and loneliness I had a proportionate degree of wealth, comfort, and fame; but, strange to say, I could not make up my mind as to my future career, and did not know in which direction I really wanted to go. For some time it had been my great desire to be an interpreter at one of the European embassies: to be an interpreter like those whom I saw honoured and feared at the Porte, riding on a high horse attended by servitors, and enjoying a certain amount of distinction in the Pera circles. But I never tried very hard to realise this ambition, for I knew that such a position could only be obtained through official connections with the Governments con-

cerned. It would have been far easier for me to get an appointment with the Porte itself, especially as I had been employed for some considerable time in the translation bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and through my connection with the highest dignitaries might have accomplished something, like, for instance, my former colleague, Murad Effendi (Werner), who, as is well known, ended his career as Ottoman ambassador at the Hague. I cannot tell why, but an official career in Turkey, an appointment in a State which was merely tolerated in Europe, had no attractions whatever for me. State officials are irregularly paid there, and absolutely dependent upon the whims of their superiors; advancement is not in any way dependent upon personal merit, and altogether such State service had no charm for me.

Possibly similar motives would have made me object to service in Europe also, for we too suffer from the same disease which has thrown Turkey on its deathbed; but because of my origin and lack of means I had never dared to think of any diplomatic appointment at home; and besides, I should probably soon have tired of even the greatest success in this department, for in the first place my unbounded sense of freedom could not in the long run have brooked any interference or subordination, and in the second place I was, and ever shall be, an incorrigible enthusiast and visionary, only delighting in the extraordinary; a man who,

running helter-skelter after empty phantoms, does not come to his senses and never knows what he really wants or can do. Perhaps some will say that these are the very people called upon to accomplish extraordinary things, and that with more reflection I might have shrunk back from many a mad enterprise. True ; but one must not overlook the faults and mistakes of such ill-weighed, badly arranged steps ; and the effects of these faults and mistakes I have often experienced during my travels and during my after-life !

The only consolation and refuge in all my complicated ambitions and aimless endeavours was, and remained always, a steady progress in my studies and the conviction that, true to my principle, accepted in early life, "*Nulla dies sine linea*," I had not one lost day to record. While I was perfecting myself in the acquisition of certain peculiar linguistic niceties, which only practice on the spot and constant intercourse can teach, and thus gradually becoming an accomplished Effendi, I had from the very commencement of my sojourn in Turkish houses set myself to the reading of Turkish manuscripts, and I had thus overcome the great difficulty of deciphering such manuscripts and also made rapid progress in the knowledge of Ottoman history. I had access to the libraries, and in the historical works which formerly I knew only by name I found so much that had reference to the history of Hungary that I intended to begin my

literary career by translating these. Besides this I made a study of the conversational language, and a Germano-Turkish pocket dictionary containing about 14,000 words, which was published in Pera, 1858, by Georg Köhler, was the first work with which I appeared before the public. It was also the first German book printed in Constantinople. To this purely scientific occupation I soon added public writing, as my constant and intimate intercourse with the political circles of the high Porte enabled me to obtain accurate information about the political questions of the day. Stambul, although only separated from Pera by the Golden Horn, is quite cut off from this centre of European life on account of the strong line of demarcation between the Turkish circles and Pera ; and when on my daily visits to the European quarter I came into contact with politicians and journalists, I was looked upon and sought after as a source of information for the latest news and disclosures. I was surprised to see how little the Pera world knew of what was going on in Stambul ; I hastened to enlighten the world by correct information, and became in this manner, without seeking or desiring it, reporter and journalist. I gained my first journalistic spurs with the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, through its correspondent, a Prussian officer named Reiner. I sent in a few notes, which he inserted in his Correspondence. Later on I wrote letters under my Turkish name,

“Reshid,” for the *Pesti Naplo* in Budapest, and instead of an honorarium I received only patriotic acknowledgments. When Vienna’s attention had been drawn towards the originality of my Hungarian correspondence the *Wanderer* appointed me as regular correspondent. Amongst these many-sided occupations of teacher, historian, Softa, and linguist my studies regarding the origin of the Magyars were always uppermost. The mysterious origin of the Magyar nation and language, which to this day has not yet been explained, was a subject which ever since I began my linguistic studies had particularly interested me. It had taken hold of my youthful fancy also, because at school many tales and legends had been told us in explanation of it. The campaign of the warlike ancestors of the present Hungarians had at all times awakened in the hearts of the Magyars a peculiar interest in and sense of the poetic charm of lands of the interior of Asia, and behind the curtain which as yet hid the Steppe region of Central Asia (the supposed cradle of the Ural-Altaians at the time of the great migration to Europe) from the gaze of Europeans, the most wonderful pictures of national romance and inspiration were faintly discerned. When I beheld the grotesque Orientals of the interior of Asia this curiosity became naturally still more lively. The beautiful colouring of their ample robes, the stores of ammunition in their girdles, and their proud, dignified bearing must necessarily increase the

desire to claim relationship with these old-world types ; and when I realised that the similarity between the Magyar and Turkish languages increases as we advance farther into the interior of Asia I could not help being convinced in my innermost mind that the *terra incognita* of Central Asia held quite unexpected surprises for me.

The real impulse for inquiring into the ancient history of the Magyar nation dates back to my boyhood. It was in the year 1849. I was sitting with my playfellows in a maize-field. It was harvest-time and shortly after the surrender of Fort Komárom. Some straggling Honvéds, mournful and of broken-down appearance, were on their way home after the conclusion of the War of Independence, and stopped their march in the field where we were, to tell us of their struggles, and their stories made us all feel very sad. An old peasant, the owner of the field, comforted us and said, "It will all come right. Whenever our nation is in trouble the old Magyars from Asia come to our rescue, for we descend from them ; they will not fail us this time, you may be sure." "So there are old Magyars," I thought to myself, and ever since that time the idea has stuck to me. Whether it was an old tradition or a later historical legend is impossible to say, but it is a very remarkable fact that this old-world story after many centuries still lives in the national mind ; the peasant who told it to us could neither read nor write and could only speak from hearsay.

It followed as a matter of course that as an outcome of my studies in comparative philology I hoped to find in Central Asia a few rays of light to guide me through the dark regions of primitive Hungarian history. The language of Central Asia, *i.e.*, Chagataic or East Turkish, was in those days known to us in the West only by the works of the French Orientalist, Quatremère. Judging from the relationship between the written and the spoken language of the Osmanlis, I hoped and expected to find among the idioms of the Steppes and of the town-dwellers on the other side of the Oxus linguistic elements which would show a pregnant resemblance and relationship with the Magyar language, and that in consequence I could not fail to make important discoveries and considerably help the solution of the origin question. The idea of a journey to Central Asia had been in my mind for many years ; I thought of it incessantly and always tried to get into contact with the Mecca pilgrims who came to Stambul from the various khanates of Central Asia. On the other hand, I greedily devoured every scrap of Chagataic writing ; and when I was admitted to the private library of the celebrated Ali Pasha, which was rich in this subject, my joy knew no bounds. The Turks themselves looked upon this curiosity of mine as a kind of literary madness. They could not understand how I, without position and without means, living from hand to mouth, could be so enthusiastic

about such an abstract, useless, ridiculous thing, and as the witty Fuad Pasha tried to cool my ardour by the remark already mentioned, other Turks kept reiterating, "Allah akillar versin," *i.e.*, "God grant wisdom," in order that I who have none may also obtain a little. The Turks, whose national feeling has only begun quite lately to show itself, content themselves with a queer mixture of Arabic and Persian. Real Turkish does not suit them at all ; it is even considered plebeian, and of the relationship between their Turkish mother-tongue and the sister dialects of inner Asia they have but a very faint notion, if any at all. Curious as my study of the Turkish language seemed to them, my desire to travel in these remote and unsafe parts in order to gain more knowledge was absolutely incomprehensible to them. They simply thought me a maniac who, instead of soliciting the favour of influential and great men, so as to lead a pleasant and comfortable life, preferred to throw myself into the greatest dangers and privations, and who would certainly not escape them. Many shook their heads and looked compassionately at me ; they even began to fight shy of me, and when my friends saw me in company with the ragged, half-naked pilgrims from Central Asia who often came to Stambul they turned away from me and declared that I was irretrievably lost.

I need hardly say that these deplorable signs of ignorance and absolute lack of higher ideals did not

in the least disturb me. My adopted Turkdom, my pseudo-Oriental character and nature were, after all confined to external things ; in my inmost being I was filled through and through with the spirit of the West, and the deeper I penetrated into the life and thoughts of Asiatic society the more passionately and warmly did I cling to Western ideas, for there alone did I find the aspirations worthy of mankind, there alone could I see what was really noble and exalted. My resolve to tear myself away from the life at Stambul, which threatened to emasculate me, remained immovably fixed, and my plans were only somewhat delayed until the necessary travelling means should have been procured. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences had at that time, in acknowledgment of my literary work, made me a corresponding member of the institution ; and when, after an absence of four years, I returned to Pest in 1861 to deliver my entrance address to the Academy, I told Count E. Dessewffy, the president, of my plans, and asked him whether the Academy would be able to give me some assistance for the journey. The Hungarian Academy was at that time not particularly well off, but fortunately one thousand florins had been put aside for scientific travels, and Count Dessewffy, an energetic, unprejudiced man, decided at once that I should have them on condition that I went into the interior of Asia to investigate the relationships of the Magyar language. His decision was at first

objected to by some of the members on account of my bodily defects and delicate looks, also perhaps because of the small sum at my disposal. They opposed in public session, but the Count remained firm; and when an enthusiastic craniologist wanted to commission me to bring some Tartar skulls for comparison with Magyar skulls, the Count replied, "Before all things we would ask our fellow-member to bring his own skull home again; thereby he will best fulfil the charge entrusted to him."

Little as was known in Europe of Central Asia in those days, my learned compatriots had not the remotest conception of these distant parts; finally, however, the national side of the undertaking carried the victory, and although most of the members considered it a great risk, they consented to it. They took leave of me with the warmest protestations of friendship, and in order to protect me against any danger they gave me the following letter of safe-conduct written in Latin:—

"Magyar Academia.

Academia Scientiarum Hungarica sub Auspiciis
Potentissimi et Inclitissimi Principis Francisci
Josephi II. Austriae Imperatoris et Hungariae
Regis vicens.

Lecturis Salutem.

Socius noster Vir ingenuus honestissimusque
Arminius Vambéry Hungarus eo fine per nos ad

oras Asiae Tartaricas mittitur; ut ibidem studio et disquisitioni linguae et dialectorum Turcico-Tartaricarum incumbat et sic nova perscrutandae linguae nostrae popularis Hungaricae, familiae altaicae cognatae adminicula scientifica procuret.

Omnes igitur Viros Illustres, qui literas has nostras viderint, quive, vel Rei Publicae administrandae in Imperiis Summorum Principum Turciae et Persarum praesunt, vel Legationibus Principum Europaeorum funguntur, aut secus amore literarum tenentur, rogamus obtestamurque, ut eidem Socio nostro Arminio Vambéry in rebus quibuscunque, quae ad promovendum eius scopum literarum pertinent, gratiose opitulari eumque benevola protectione sua fulcire velint.

Datae Pestini in Hungarica, die 1 Augusti anno mdccclxi.

BARO JOSEPHUS EÖTVÖS

(*Acad. Sci. Hung. V. Praeses*).

DR. FRANCISCUS TOLDY,

(*Acad. Sci. Hung. Secretarius perpetuus*)."

Seal.

The good gentlemen at home hoped that I should find this letter of commendation useful with the Khans in Turkestan and the Turkoman chiefs. It would have meant at least the gallows or the executioner's sword if I had shown this infidel writing either in the Steppe or on the Oxus!

Full of glorious expectations, I left Pest in 1861

to go to Constantinople for the second time. There I wanted to make the necessary preparations to enable me to start in the early spring on my wanderings through Asia Minor and Persia. The rate of exchange being so preposterously high, the thousand florins in Austrian bank-notes had dwindled down to seven hundred, and a stay of several more months in Constantinople further reduced my little stock of ready money. When in March, 1862, I went on board the Lloyd steamer *Progresso* to Trebizond, the girdle which I wore next to my skin contained only enough to take me as far as Teheran. Truly a risky undertaking, perhaps a mad trick, the danger of which I hardly realised just then. It was somewhat hard to part with all my kind Turkish friends in Stambul. These noble people did all they could to help me, and to postpone my certain destruction, as they thought, as long as possible. They advised me to go for the present only to Persia; and as the plenipotentiary and Turkish ambassador at the court of Teheran was at that time Haidar Effendi, an intimate friend of my patron, Reouf Bey, I received, besides the official commendation of Ali Pasha, also a collective letter from several distinguished officials of the Porte, in which they commended me, the poor demented one, to his kind care. Of my European descent, of the aim and object of my journey, not one word. I had to be Reshid Effendi only, and comport myself so as to tally exactly with my letter of introduction. I

durst not do anything else, for it was imperative that I should pass for a real Turk, an Effendi from Constantinople.

As for my state of mind when the critical moment of departure arrived, I was so excited that I hardly knew what I was doing. The dreams of my childhood, the visions of my youth, the Fata Morgana which had played before my eyes through all my rambles in the literatures of Eastern and Western lands—all were now nearing realisation, and my eyes were to behold all these wonders in bodily form. Anticipation drowned the voice of reason and common sense within me. What indeed could have made me afraid? After all, the dangers before me were but of a material nature—privation, fighting the elements, risk of health, sickness. Failure and death never entered into my speculations. And what were all these sufferings to me, who had had my measure full of them in my early years? Hunger I suffered in Europe till my eighteenth year. Insufficient clothing had been my portion from earliest youth. And as for sneering and scoffing, the poor little Jew boy had had to bear plenty of that with many other insults from his Christian playmates. Where was the difference between their derisive “Hep! Heps!” and throwing of stones, and the insults of the fanatical Shiites, or the suspicion of the Central Asiatics?

Human whims and weaknesses were indeed well known to me, and experience taught me that,

whether in the rough garb of the Asiatic or in the refined dress of the Westerner, men are much the same everywhere; nay, more, I have found more compassion and kindness of heart with the former than with the latter, and the terrible pictures which literature gives us of barbarian customs and dealings need not have discouraged me too much. There is only one thing which strikes me as rather remarkable in my firm decision to carry out my intention, and this is, that having once emerged from the school of misery and wretchedness, and having tasted the pleasures of good cheer and comfort, I should voluntarily return to the former. For in Constantinople, as already mentioned, I was getting on well the last few years—very well, in fact. I had a comfortable home, plenty to eat, even a horse at my disposal; and now I was going to exchange all that, of my own free will, for a beggar's staff. This perhaps is the only thing that can be counted to my credit.

But to what can not the sting of ambition spur us! And what is our life worth where this impetus, this source of all energy, does not exist or has become weakened? Material comforts, distinctions and dignities are but particoloured toys which fascinate us only for a time. True satisfaction lies in the consciousness of having rendered if only the smallest service to mankind in general; and what in all the world is more glorious than the hope of being able to enrich the book of intellectual life

which lies open before us, if only with one single letter! Such were my thoughts and feelings, and I found strength therein to face a thousand times greater dangers, difficulties, and privations than had hitherto fallen to my lot. I have often asked myself the question whether, apart from these higher, ideal aims, the thought of material advantages, *i.e.*, my future welfare, never crossed my mind. There would certainly have been no harm in this, but if material welfare had been my object its realisation would have been far less difficult and more certain of success if I had followed an official career at Constantinople, where I had influential patrons, and where I could have settled down in quiet pastures. No; my scheme was the outcome of my heated fancy, a mighty longing for the unknown and an insatiable thirst for adventure.

My Second Journey to the East

CHAPTER V

MY SECOND JOURNEY TO THE EAST

As I have published several books about this my second journey to the East, and as these, being translated into various languages, have become public property over the civilised world, I intend in these memoirs to touch only upon such points as are of a purely personal character, and could therefore find no place in the general accounts of my travels written for the world at large. And I want to lay particular stress upon such details as led to the gradual transformation of the Stambul Effendi into the confirmed Asiatic and the mendicant Dervish. In their light my many strange adventures will appear but the natural outcome of my career. This I consider the more necessary as it will enable my readers to note both the psychical transitions and the ethical and social influences to which the constant and intimate intercourse with the natives necessarily subjected me. It will help to show how, in a comparatively short time, changes

were effected which even I myself cannot quite account for.

After leaving the hospitable roof of Emin Mukhlis Pasha, the Governor of Trebizond, I continued my journey to Persia in the company of a small trading caravan. As I laboriously climbed up the Pontus mountain slope, and watched the sea gradually receding in the distance, a feeling of anxiety came over me, and for the first time I experienced that internal struggle between the craving for adventure and a sickening dread of the uncertainty and perilousness of my undertaking. It was springtime. The glorious scenery and the charms of nature all along the road as I ascended the Propontic mountain had well-nigh dispersed these dark forebodings, and my enthusiasm had almost gained the day. But when at night I had to put up at a dirty, loathsome caravansary, and after spreading my carpet on the bare floor, tired out as I was with my first ride, had to prepare my own frugal evening meal, the cold gravity of my position overwhelmed me, and I realised for the first time the awful difference between dark reality and rose-coloured imagination. My rice was burnt, the fat rancid, and the bread one of the worst kinds I had ever tasted in Turkey. My bed on the cold floor was anything but comfortable, and when, in spite of all, I fell into a heavy sleep, I had only the exhaustion after my first ride to thank for it. That

first long ride left its painful effects for two or three days. The stretch between Trebizond and Erzerum, a foretaste of the long ride to Samarkand, was altogether the most painful I have ever experienced; for in the first place I had to ingratiate myself with my fellow-travellers, mainly consisting of raw, dirty, fanatical mule-drivers, and, worst of all, I had to get used to the vermin with which every night's lodging swarmed. Arrived at Erzerum, where I enjoyed the hospitality of my former principal, Hussein Daim Pasha, who here occupied the position of military governor, I enjoyed a good rest. The kind-hearted man, an enthusiastic religious mystic, was firmly convinced of the pious motives of my journey to Bokhara, and both he and his adjutant, Hidayet Effendi, instructed me for hours in the mysteries of the various orders, and especially of the Nakish Bendi, to the grave of whose founder I was to make a pilgrimage. It was during my stay at this house that I witnessed quite an original use of superstition in the service of the law. One day the Pasha lost a valuable diamond ring, and as he had not been out of the house one might justly suppose that the ring would be found, unless one of the numerous servants of the establishment had made away with it. As all investigations were fruitless, Hidayet Effendi sent for a celebrated wonder-working Sheikh, who squatted down in the middle of the great entrance-hall, where all the servants were assembled. I impatiently waited the issue of events. At last the

Sheikh, sitting cross-legged, produced from under his mantle a black cock, and holding it in his lap he invited all the servants, each in turn, to come up to him, stroke the cock softly and straightway put his hand into his pocket; then, said the Sheikh, the cock, without any more ado, will declare who is the thief by crowing. When all the servants had passed in turn before the Sheikh and touched the cock, he told them all to hold out their hands. All hands were black, with the exception of one, which had remained white, and whose owner was at once designated as the thief. The cock had been blackened all over with coal dust, and as the thief, fearing detection, had avoided touching him, his hand had remained white, and consequently his guilt was declared. The servant received his punishment and the Sheikh his reward.

My sojourn in the house of the Pasha and in Erzerum generally, was very pleasant and comfortable, but hardly a good preparation for my further journey over the Armenian heights to the frontier of Persia, one of the most troublesome étapes of Asiatic travel. The poor Armenian houses, mostly underground holes, looking from the outside more like molehills than anything else, consist of one apartment in which the inmates live, crowded together with from ten to twenty buffaloes, and the first night I spent in company with these evil-smelling animals, tormented by smoke and heat and vermin, will ever remain vivid in my mind. The crisp morning air

of the high Armenian plateau acted like a tonic upon my weakened nerves. I felt supremely happy and drank in the pure, keen air with delight. One would like to shout for very joy if it were not for the constant dread of an attack by the Kurds who make their home in these K rogl y passes, and are ever more keenly on the watch for small caravans than even for single travellers.

It was here on the Dagar mountains that I had my first encounter with the Kurdish robber hordes. It was my baptism of fire, but instead of filling me with enthusiasm, a deathly cold shiver came over me when at the request of my Armenian fellow-travellers I took up my pistol to act the protector. The precious bales of goods of the Armenian merchants had already been unloaded by the Kurds, and we stormed up the steep incline to call the robbers to account. Bravery, quick decision, and contempt of death are noble virtues, but one is not always born with them ; they have to be learned and practised. The bold front, the keen eye, and the blood coursing wildly through one's veins are all symptoms of valour, but they may also be those of a more or less reckless temper. Since that first episode on the Dagar I have in my subsequent travels often been exposed to attacks and surprises of various kinds, until at last I learned to face all dangers boldly, and had no more fear of death. But I still hold to my opinion, that heroes are not born but made, and that the most timid home-lover

can by a gradual process of compulsory self-defence become a very lion of strength and valour. Thus and thus only is produced that much-exalted virtue of personal courage and heroism. The pressing need of self-preservation is the real source of all heroism, and in the physically strong this psychological quality can hardly fail to show itself.

As I crossed the Persian frontiers at Diadin, and actually found myself in the land of Iran—the land which hitherto I had only viewed in the light of poetic fancy—the bare and barren wilderness which met my eyes added to my physical and mental sufferings, rudely tore away the last vestige of the glamour which my imagination had woven round this blissful spot. I was thoroughly disillusioned. Here I was, an Effendi, the greatest monster in the eyes of the Shiite Persian, in virtue of my antecedents, subject to scornful remarks, derisive laughter, and continually exposed to gross insults; for the Persians on their native soil are bold and audacious fanatics. As if I had not suffered enough of this in my early youth! The Hydra of religious fury now attacked and tormented me in a new form, and the “Segi Sunni!” (“Sunnitic dog!”), a variant of the “Hep! Hep!” of former days, resounded day and night in my ears. The villainy and knavery of the Persian merchants and Mollas were not less offensive than the stones thrown by the Christian street-boys and the invectives of the Catholic college instructors. But this trial also I

learned to overcome. Patience and endurance disarm the bitterest opponent, and when in a melodious voice and with strict Shiite modulation I recited a Sura from the Koran, or a passage from the Mesnevi, the sacred books common to both sects, their anger subsided and my fanatical fellow-travellers comforted themselves by saying, "He is not quite lost yet, he may yet grow to be a good Mussulman," *i.e.*, a Shiite. As will appear from the following pages of this work, it was for the most part religion, the product of Divine inspiration and the supposed means for ennobling and raising mankind, which made me feel the baseness of humanity most acutely ; and from my cradle to my old age, in Europe as well as in Asia, among those of highest culture, as well as amid the crudest barbarism, I have found fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, malice, and injustice emanating mostly from the religious people, and always on behalf of religion !

Arrived on Persian soil, my material troubles and struggles were further enhanced by physical sufferings. I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the furtive looks of anger and disdain cast upon me by the Persians I met in the streets or in the bazaar of Khoi. The national language is Turkish there, but as soon as I opened my mouth my pure Stambul accent at once betrayed my Sunnitic character. This ill-will is a retribution for the insults and the chicanery to which the Shiite strangers in Turkey are exposed, but I could not help asking

myself, "What have I done to these people? Have I in any way aided in preventing Ali from succeeding to the Prophet?" But all speculations and arguments were useless. I came in the character of an Effendi, and the profound disgust which this word awakens in the Shiite mind accounted quite sufficiently for all the insults I had to bear. Even for money these fanatics would scarcely sell me anything. The question arose whether Sunnites, like Christians, were to be accounted *nedjis*, *i.e.*, unclean, whom to touch is a sin; and it was only after prolonged and violent discussions that I could pacify their scruples on this point. If there had been a livelier intercourse between Turks and Persians I should probably have had less to suffer, but I was the first private Osmanli who, for many years, had travelled in Persia, and therefore I must take weal and woe into the bargain. I was surprised to find that the women were far more vehement in their expressions than the men; many spat at me as they passed me on the road, giving expression to their hatred by pithy oaths. Truly woman everywhere is more passionate than man! Thanks to my excellent health and vigour, still further improved by abnormal physical exertions, I was able to cope with these mental distractions. I even enjoyed the excitement of them; and when at Tebris, in the Emir caravanseray, I had for several days been an attentive spectator from within my little cell, of the mad carryings-on of the Persian traders, craftsmen,

beggars, Dervishes, buffoons, singers, and jugglers, I felt that I was gradually being transformed into an Oriental, and that my existence as a poor traveller was quite bearable. Exchanging my semi-European dress, piece by piece, for the long, wide Persian garments, I gradually accomplished the metamorphosis of my outward appearance; I was no longer conspicuous in a crowd. Once, as I was loitering about in the courtyard of the caravaneray, I noticed among the bargaining groups collected round the loaded and unloaded beasts of burden a European, who while unpacking his bales was evidently at a loss for a Turkish word. Impatiently he turned over the leaves of a small octavo volume, and I was not a little amused to recognise in it my own Turkish pocket dictionary printed in Pera many years ago. When the merchant (he was a Swiss, a Mr. W., commission agent at Tebris), after a fruitless search, put the little book impatiently aside with no very complimentary remarks, I suddenly addressed him in German, remarking that the writer of his little dictionary was not exactly a fool, only that he had been looking in the wrong place. To be addressed in German by a ragged semi-Turkish, semi-Persian individual in the bazaar at Tebris was a little too much even for the equanimity of this son of Mercury. We exchanged a few words, reproaches and irritation were followed by apologies, and the end of the comical intermezzo was an invitation to

his house and lavish hospitality for a few days. Amusing adventures of a similar nature befell me on other occasions, and it was always and everywhere my linguistic skill, and the ease with which I could reproduce foreign accents, intonations, and constructions, and in many instances quote suitable maxims and passages of the Koran, accompanied with the usual gesticulations, that took with my audience, and made me pass for a native in spite of my foreign physiognomy.

I had noticed this with pleasure on the banks of the Bosphorus, and more still on the first part of my journey in the interior of Asia. I could not say that I was proof against all suspicion, for the typical expression of the face always excited doubt, and was detrimental to me, but in the variegated national mosaic of the West Asiatic world, where types and races of all zones meet and mix in ever-varying amalgamation, there language is everything and looks nothing; and when this language, moreover, expresses respect for Allah and the Prophet, one becomes incorporated *de jure et de facto* in the all-encompassing bond of religious community, and one ceases to be a foreigner.

And so my stay at the caravanseray of Tebris was full of curious impressions and incidents. Sitting in my poor, bare little cell, I watched for hours together the confused bustle of the bartering, wrangling, shouting, singing, begging crowd in the court. Sometimes I went out among them, spoke

to one or another, talked about trade in its various branches, and in the evening hours when it was comparatively quiet in the caravanseray, sometimes, when I could not get out of it, I joined in the conversation about sectarianism, politics, and other matters. The merchant of the East is always a man of the opposition, for he has much to suffer from anarchy and the *régime* of absolutism, and his open criticism has often surprised me.

After a prolonged stay in Tebris, I found myself at last in the saddle again on the way to Teheran. The future appeared more hopeful, and the success of my undertaking somewhat more certain. Instead of travelling in the usual caravan I had joined a company of travellers who, although natives of Sunnitic lands, Kurds and Arabs, wandered all over Iran in Shiite disguise. Religion was their business—that is to say, they travelled from village to village singing elegies (Rouzekhan), and daily shed bucketfuls of tears in the commemoration of the tragic fate of the martyrs Hasan and Husein, and then, after pocketing the shining gold pieces, the disguised Sunnites laughed in their sleeve. Another kind of these religion-traders occupied themselves with the expediting of Persians, both living and dead, to the holy shrine at Kerbela. To the former they served as guides on their pilgrimage, getting as much as they could out of them, and secretly conniving with the marauding Beduins, who attacked and stripped them of all they possessed. The

latter, *i.e.*, the departed faithful worshippers of Ali, are transported by them between four planks to Kerbela and Nedshef. In my *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia* I have attempted to describe such a funeral caravan. It is the most awful and gruesome spectacle imaginable, but it is a profitable trade; and when I travelled in company with these gentlemen expeditioners, elegy-singers, and Kerbela-pilgrims, I came to the conclusion that the juggling of the pious in East and West, amongst Christians and Mohammedans, is all the same. Here as there the maxim holds good: "*Mundus vult decipi—ergo decipiatur*," only that the felicity of being deceived is in Asia far more intense than with us in Europe.

In Asia the light of civilisation and revelation has as yet illumined but a few. Scepticism has always been timid in the world of Islam, even in the time of its glory, and now that poverty and misery reign supreme, and the struggle for existence is almost the only thing thought of or cared for, there is but little desire for metaphysical speculations; people have no time for meditation, and conform with cold apathy to the old prescribed forms of faith.

In spite of the oppressive July heat, in spite of occasional nightly attacks, or rather intimidations by robber bands, I arrived full of good courage in the Persian capital; and after I had somewhat recovered from the fatigues of the journey at the

Turkish Embassy in the cool valley of the Shimran mountains, no one was happier than I when the cooler weather set in, and, leaving luxury and comfort behind, I was able to resume my adventurous route to South Persia, *i.e.*, to Ispahan, Shiraz, and Persepolis. This journey formed, so to speak, the second course of my preparation for the expedition into Central Asia, and if I had not gone through this course I don't know but that my perilous expedition into Turkestan would on the whole have been a failure. When I arrived in Teheran I was greeted with the discouraging news that a journey to Bokhara was fraught with gigantic and unconquerable dangers, and not by any means so easy as I had imagined, and, moreover, that in the North-East of Persia, because of the war between Dost Mohammed and Ahmed Shah, the journey *viâ* Meshed and Merv or *viâ* Herat had become perfectly impossible. So I was obliged, in order to avoid further inactivity, to find another opening and a new field of labour. As the study of the Aryan languages was not at all in my programme, there seemed no object in my going to South Persia. But I durst not break off the hardening system I had commenced, and I had already grown so fond of the excitement of venturesome expeditions that the dry saddle, dry bread, and dry soil were more to my taste than all the luxury, riches, and wealth of the hospitable Turkish Embassy. The kind reception I had met with there secured

for me, in the Persian capital, the half-official character of an attaché to the Embassy. I gained admittance to the houses of the aristocracy, and was also presented to the King, and when ready to start for South Persia the Persian Government gave me the following letter of commendation :—

“The State officials of the glorious residence as far as Shiraz are hereby notified that the high-born and noble Reshid Effendi, a subject of the Ottoman Government, who has come to travel in this land, is now on his way to the Province of Fars. On account of the friendly relations between the two States, and also because of the harmony prescribed by the common Moslem religion, all officials of those regions are hereby instructed to see that the traveller above mentioned receive all due honour and respect; to protect him on the journey and at the different stations against all injuries and molestations.

“MIRZA SAID KHAN

“(Minister of Foreign Affairs).

“TEHERAN, 24th Safar, 1279.”

Considering the very small consideration which even the very highest official commands receive in the provinces, I did not attach overmuch importance to this letter. It has, however, protected me occasionally against suspicion.

In Ispahan and Shiraz I could, in my character of

Stambul Effendi under State protection, obtain a much more intimate knowledge of the land and the people of Persia than falls to the lot of any other European. I particularly enjoyed my stay at the house of Imam Djumaa of Ispahan, the Shiite high priest at that time, to whom I was a regular problem, and who tried in vain to penetrate my incognito. This cunning and most skilful man, who exercised great influence, gave himself much trouble to convert me to the Shiite sect. Evenings for disputations were organised, in which learned Shiite Akhondes (priests) and Mollas unpacked all the paraphernalia of their sectarian learning for my benefit; they entered into the minutest details to prove the correctness of Shiite dogmas and rites, they marshalled a whole army of arguments to prove the usurpations of the first Kalifs, Abubeker, Osman, and Omar, and Ali's irrefutable right of succession. As I had often been present at similar discussions in the opposite—that is, in the Sunnitic—camp, I was not afraid to put in a word to the point here and there; but when, very closely pressed, I was at a loss for an answer, my opponents rejoiced, and in overcoming me, the disguised European, they fancied they had conquered all the Sunnites. Poor fools! what would have been their feelings if they had known that through contact with a Frenghi they had become Nedjis, *i.e.*, unclean, and that they had taken all this trouble over a declared enemy of all positive faith. In my

intercourse with the lower classes these discussions were not carried on in quite so pleasant a manner. During the long caravan journey I was never free from their impertinent questions; whether on the march, resting, eating or drinking, they challenged me, and left me no peace. Even in the coolness of the night, when I had fallen asleep seated on my slowly-trotting donkey, I was often roughly roused and accosted with such remarks as, "Now, then, do you mean to say that this mangy dog, called Omar, this hideous, infernal beast, this stinking vermin, was not a usurper? Answer, Effendi, for I tell you I have a great mind to send you down to the infernal regions after your dirty patron-saint."

Thirteen hundred years have passed away since first the spirit of mastery and boastfulness began to wage this barbarous, destructive war in the name of religion—a war which has led to the shedding of oceans of blood, and cost mountains of wreck and ruin. And here was I, a harmless wayfarer, a follower of Voltaire and David Strauss, rudely roused from my peaceful slumbers and forcibly dragged into stupid arguments! It was too bad!

Indeed, my visit to South Persia, with all its glorious monuments many thousand years old, with the graves of Hafiz and Saadi, cost me very dearly. In my book about Persia I did not mention a tenth part of all the sufferings, all the privations I had to bear, and yet, in spite of all, I experienced intense

joy during this expedition. Every modulation of the beautiful South Persian dialect, the sight of the glorious monuments of Iranian antiquity, made my bosom swell and wrapt me in a world of delicious dreams. Never shall I forget the night of my arrival at the ruins of Persepolis. It was bright moonlight, and I stood for hours, transfixed in silent wonder, gazing at the gigantic monuments of ancient culture. Then the evenings spent in company with Persian literati, at Hafiz's grave, with music and song and the pearly goblet in our hands, or the solemn moments of pious meditation in Saadi's mausoleum, shall I ever forget them?

Apart from these intellectual enjoyments of a peculiar nature, the journey to and from Shiraz, which lasted for several months, had considerably hardened me, and given me a quite extraordinary elasticity. I could brave wind and rain, heat and cold, without the slightest risk; I slept in the saddle as on the softest bed, I rode on any kind of saddle-beast over hill and dale; nay, I took special pleasure in horsemanship—a thing which, considering my lame leg, is now incomprehensible to me. I swung myself into the saddle of a horse in full gallop, I mounted high-loaded mules and camels as if I had been brought up with rope-dancers, and I felt safe in company with the roughest specimens of humanity as if I had lived all my life with vagabonds and robbers. Under these conditions it is not surprising that, on returning from South Persia, I

stuck to my resolution to undertake the journey to Bokhara, if necessary *viâ* Herat and right through the Turkoman Steppes, and that all the words of advice, warning, and intimidation of European and Turkish friends at Teheran were fruitless, and left me perfectly unmoved. I thought to myself, "What can befall me worse than what I have gone through already?" I had long since discarded the character of the poor Effendi in which I had commenced my travels, and, without being conscious of it, I had adopted the part of a roving Dervish, for Dervish is the name applied to all Orientals who have not run after earthly goods, but lead a roaming life in search of adventure, with religion as their sign-board. Now, whether I begged my bread in Persia, in the character of a Dervish, in the daytime wandering about in tatters, and at night in the Tekke (convent) singing hymns, to while away the time, or whether I did the same in Middle Asia, came to much the same thing. On the contrary, I thought in the latter portion of the Islamic world, where I can move more freely and probably get on better as Osmanli amongst Sunnites and Turks, better days may (possibly) be in store for me; instead of torments and insults and scorn, I may find honour and liberal hospitality; and so strong was my confidence in the success of my undertaking that I began to have a perfect longing for Central Asia. It was rather amusing to see the way in which the Europeans at Teheran viewed my resolution, and how

the opinion gained ground that I had fallen into a fatal delusion, and that, unconscious of danger, I was hurrying on to certain destruction. The tragic end of the English officers, Conolly and Stoddart, who died a martyr's death at Bokhara, was then fresh in everybody's mind. Monsieur de Blocqueville had not long since returned from his Turkoman captivity, and the frightful details of his experiences as prisoner under the Tekke still resounded in our ears. Stories were told of the mysterious death of an English officer, Captain Wyburn, who had suddenly disappeared on the Turkoman Steppes, and not a trace of whom could be found. Other imaginary atrocities were conjured up, and it seemed only natural that everybody did his best to dissuade me from my purpose, and to paint a journey into the very centre of Moslem fanaticism in the most glaring colours. Curiously enough, my friends at the English Embassy discouraged me less than any; and, pointing to the travels of Burnes and Dr. Wolff, Mr. R. Th. thought that I might have a chance of success. Count Gobineau, the French Ambassador, himself a literary man and Orientalist, gave me but little hope; my success would not please him, for he was filled with envy and jealousy. They were most put out at the Turkish Embassy, where I had been so warmly recommended by the Porte, and where they were really anxious about my fate.

I was not at all loath to leave Persia; what

charm could a longer sojourn in Iran have for me? A description of the political and social conditions of this land, already sufficiently well known even in those days, offered no special attraction to my literary vanity. True, the instructive and classical works of Dr. Polak and Lord Curzon of Kedleston had not appeared yet, but I could not have written anything absolutely new about Persia. In my intimate intercourse with the people of the land I was principally struck with the more intensely Oriental character of the Government and society, and all that I saw strengthened me in my conviction that Persia was at least a hundred years behind Turkey, notwithstanding the greater intellectuality of the people, and would certainly take longer to extricate itself from the pool of Asiatic thought. Of the West and Western culture they had but very vague notions in Persia. The young king, Nasreddin Shah, was instructed by his court physicians, Cloquet, Polak, and Tholozan, in many points of our Western culture, and he took a good deal of trouble to mould his surroundings upon their suggestions. The prudish conservatism of the Orientals, supported by the national pride and boundless vanity of the Persians—who, recollecting the age of the Sasanides and the glorious period of Shah Abbas II. always try to minimise the triumphs of our civilisation, or even hold it in derision—hindered all healthy and vigorous progress. Even the heads of the adminis-

tration very seldom knew French. In my frequent intercourse with Mirza Said Khan, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, a native Persian of the old school, I often received amusing proofs of this ignorance and obstinacy. He lacked even the elementary knowledge of the geography and history of Europe, and all that I told him of the power and might of some of the European States was nonsense in his eyes, and he used to say reproachfully "If Europe is really so great, why does it want to enrich itself by commerce with Persia, and why does it force itself upon us?" Mirza Yahya Khan, the first adjutant of the king, who knew French and was somewhat enlightened by his travels in Europe, used to laugh aloud at the ignorance of the minister; but even he allowed the West but few prerogatives, and always boasted of the greater intellectual endowments and sagacity of the Persian people in general. With the scholars and literati I could not get on at all. Referring to their truly beautiful literature of antiquity, they used to speak with poetic ecstasy about the superiority and unequalled beauty of Eastern thought, and were especially proud of their philosophers. "If your thinkers are really so great and sublime," I was often told, "why then do you translate our Sadi, Hafiz, and Khayyám? We have no desire for *your* classics." These people are happy in their Persian microcosm, and I well recollect the disputations I used to have with the Akhondes (learned). These thickly turbaned priests

struck me as being remarkably liberal-minded in religious matters. They spoke about Mohammed and his doctrine without any fanaticism, from a purely historical point of view, and did not appear shocked at the most daring hypothesis or suggestion, which surprised me very much, for amongst the Sunnites of Turkey and Central Asia such discussions would have been called blasphemous.

Looked at from this point of view Persia was highly interesting to me, and if I had not had my mind full of plans for travel I could perhaps have turned the advantage of my incognito to better account by a comparative study of individual Oriental nations. But it was no good, I was compelled to go forward; and while in this excited frame of mind I accidentally made the acquaintance, at the Turkish Embassy, of some Tartar pilgrims on their way back from Mecca to Central Asia. When I acquainted the members of the Turkish Embassy with my intention to travel in company with these frightful-looking people, half-starved, tattered zealots, covered with dirt and sores, one can imagine the surprise of those kind-hearted folks. The ambassador, Haidar Effendi, a particularly high-minded man and extremely tolerant in matters of religion, was quite upset about it. He threatened to use force; but when he saw that all his expostulations had not the slightest effect upon me, he did his utmost to minimise the danger of my undertaking. He called the leaders of the

beggar-band before him, gave them rich presents and recommended me to their special care and protection ; he also gave me an authorised passport, bearing the name of Hadji Mehemmed Reshid Effendi, with the official signature and seal. Seeing that I had never been in Mecca, and had therefore no legal right to the title of Hadji (pilgrim), this official lie may be viewed in various lights. But it saved my life, and I owe my success to it ; for this pass, in the critical moments of my journey incognito, supplied the necessary documentary evidence. The official document bearing the Tugra (Sultan's signature) is at all times an object of pious veneration to the Turkomans. They recognise in the Osmanlis their brethren in the faith, and the simple children of the Steppes came from far and near to behold the holy Tugra, and after performing the prescribed ablutions, to press the sacred sign against their brow. In Khiva and in Bokhara, where the official sign was better known, it elicited still more respect. In fact, I may honestly say that I owe my success to this passport ; and when one considers the magnanimous tolerance which must have prompted these Mohammedan dignitaries and representatives of the Sultan to describe a European and a freethinker as a Mussulman pilgrim, I think the deception may be condoned. An official of humane Christian Europe would scarcely have shown as much generosity to a Mohammedan ! After Haidar Effendi, I found another kind friend in

Dr. Bimsenstein, an Austrian by birth, who acted as physician to the Legation at Teheran. He seemed much concerned about me, but when he saw that even his fatherly advice was of no avail, and that the prospect of a martyr's death did not frighten me, he called me into his dispensary and gave me three pills, saying, "These are strychnine pills. I give them to you to spare you the agonies of a slow martyr's death. When you see that preparations are being made to torture you to death, and when you cannot see a ray of hope anywhere, then swallow these pills; they will shorten your agony." With tears the kind-hearted man gave me the fateful globules, which I carefully hid in the wadding of my upper garment. They have been my sheet-anchor, and many a time when in moments of danger I felt the little hard protuberances in the wadding, I have derived comfort from them. My valuables consisted of a silver watch, the face of which had been transformed into a Kiblenuma, *i.e.*, a compass, or more correctly, an indicator or hand to show the position of Mecca and Medina, and a few ducats, hidden between the soles of my shoes, which I only had occasion to extricate twice during the whole of my journey. "Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator." So I was safe against the greed of my fellow-travellers and any other robbers. I wore my very oldest Persian clothes, and in every respect made myself as much as possible in outward appearance

like my beggarly companions. So I started on my adventurous expedition with a cheerful mind, and turning my back upon Teheran, the last connection with European memories, I set my face towards the Caspian Sea.

And now in the evening of my life,—the glow of enthusiasm vanished, and heart and head cooled down almost to freezing-point,—looking back upon this wild folly of my younger days, I cannot but condemn the whole affair as absolutely unjustifiable and opposed to all common sense. The first part of my plan and its execution were not matters of calculation and premeditation, but a leap in the dark, a rushing forward at random. I quite forgot to consider whether my physical strength would hold out in the unusual struggle, and whether with my lame foot I should be able to get over large distances *per pedes apostolorum*. Also I had not sufficiently taken into account the suspicion of Central Asiatic tyrants, and forgot that Bokhara was not only a hotbed of hyperzealous fanaticism, but also of the most consummate villains in the world. I had not the faintest idea that I should be watched day and night by numerous spies, reporters, and officious hirelings, who followed me in the lonely Steppes, in the bazaars, the streets, the mosques, and the convents, and took note of every word, every movement of mine. I never thought that my European features would at once attract attention among the masses of pure Ural-

Altaic and genuine Iranian type, and form a permanent suspicion against me ; and least of all did I think that, notwithstanding my versatility, my well-tempered nervous system, and my experience in the morals and customs of Islam, prying eyes were always busy trying to look through my incognito. I had had no idea of the fiendish cunning and subtilty of the Bokhariots, and the frightful crudeness of the Osbeg court at Khiva. How could I have known all this, seeing that these countries and people, cut off for centuries from the other Islamic States, and perfectly unknown to Western nations, still continued in the stage of ancient almost primitive culture and ignorance, and had nothing in common with the civilisation of the Turks, Persians, Kurds, and Arabs, with whom I was familiar? With every step I took into this strange world my astonishment and surprise and also my fear grew. I realised that I had entered into a perfectly strange and unknown world of ideas, that I had undertaken a most risky thing, that my former experiences would avail me nothing here, and that I had to gather up all my strength to escape the dangers on all sides. The preservation of my incognito was a tremendous mental and physical exertion. As for the former, I could not and dare not relax for one moment during the whole of my journey ; by day or by night, asleep or awake, alone or in company, I had always to remember my *rôle*, be ever on my guard, and never

by the slightest mistake or neglect betray my identity. I used mostly at night, when all were asleep round me, to practise certain grimaces and contortions of eyes and face, I tried to imitate the gesticulations which in the daytime I had observed from my travelling companions; and so great is human adaptability to foreign customs and habits that within two months I was in fashion, manners, and speech a faithful copy of my Hadji companions, and in the eyes of ordinary Turkomans passed for a regular Khokandian or Kashgarian. Of course my poverty-stricken and dirty appearance greatly assisted the delusion. In the seams and cracks of the face sand and dirt had collected, and formed quite a crust, which could not be removed by the prescribed ablutions, for the simple reason that as we were often short of water in the Steppe, I had to take refuge in Teyemmun, *i.e.* (a substitute), washing with sand. My beard grew rugged and coarse, my eyes rolled wilder, and my gait in the awkward full garments, perhaps also because of my frequent and long rides, had become as unwieldy, waddling and uncomfortable as if I had lived from early youth with Mongol and Turkish tribes. I cannot and need not hide the fact that at first these physical discomforts were very irksome to me, and cost me many a pang. To dip one's fingers into a pot of rice, which for want of fat is cooked with tallow-candle, and in which the Tartars plunged their filthy, wounded fists, cannot

exactly be described as one of the most pleasurable methods of feeding, nor is it a treat to spend the night squeezed in among a row of sleeping, snoring beggars. Both are equally undesirable, but when in these predicaments I recalled the sufferings and privations of my early life, the comparison made me realise that the European mendicant has much the advantage over his Central Asiatic comrade, for the sufferings of hunger, thirst, and vermin are far worse in Turkestan than they ever could be in Europe.

What I had to suffer from this last evil, the lice, which multiply in the most appalling manner in Central Asia, passes all description, and, objectionable as the subject may be, I must try to give some idea of the manner in which I endeavoured to rid myself of this pest, if only for a short space of time. With the Dervish the catching of these insects forms part of the toilet, and is also looked upon as a kind of after-dinner enjoyment. One begins by using the thumb-nails as a weapon of defence against these intruding guests; and the picture of various groups engaged in search and slaughter was sometimes intensely ludicrous. In the second stage of the cleansing process the garment under treatment is held over the red-hot cinders, and the animals, stunned by the fierce heat, die a fiery death with a peculiar crackling noise. If this *auto-da-fé* is not procurable, the garment is strewn all over with sand, and exposed to the scorching rays of the sun. The vermin are thus

invited to exchange their lower cooler quarters for the upper warmer ones, and once there they can easily be shaken off. When neither fire nor sand is available the garment is placed near an ant-hill, and the troublesome insects are left to the mercy of the ants, who soon make their way into the smallest crevices and apertures and carry off their prey. Curiously enough, this pest is far worse in winter than in summer, for when, on my journey between Herat and Meshed, I lay huddled up in one corner of my bed, these creatures, always in search of heat, collected wherever the heat of my body was greatest, and no sooner had I turned from the right on to the left side, than these detestable animals at once instituted a formal migration and took possession of the heated portion of my body. Now I understood for the first time why in the Jewish Holy Scriptures the plague of lice is mentioned second after that of the water turned into blood. Next to this plague I suffered much from the fatigues of the journey. First of all there was the scorching heat on the plain of the Balkan mountains up to the Khiva oasis, where the thermometer, as I learned afterwards from the reports of Colonel Markusoff, rises fifty and fifty-two degrees Réaumur, and where the lack of drinkable water causes the traveller unheard-of sufferings. One inhales fire, so to speak, the skin shrivels visibly, and one is almost blinded by the vibrations of the air. From eight o'clock in the morning till

three or four in the afternoon it is like being in a baker's oven, and the torture is aggravated when one has to sit huddled together and cross-legged in the Kedjeve (or basket) on the back of a camel, stinking of sweat and sores. Sometimes, when the poor beast could go no farther through the thick sand, I had to climb down from my perch and go for long distances on foot. On account of my lame leg I had to lean on a stick with my right hand, and on one of these tramps my right arm became so terribly swollen that I suffered great pain for several days. Apart from these inconveniences, I enjoyed excellent health, which rather surprised me, as the half-baked bread freely mixed with sand, the best we could make in the Steppes, was apt to be somewhat indigestible. So much for the magic effect of an outdoor life and the excitement of an adventurous expedition !

And yet all these physical sufferings were light as compared with the mental and nervous strain I underwent. Every look, every gesture, every sign, no matter how innocent, and even in the circle of my most intimate friends, I viewed with apprehension, lest it might contain some hidden allusion to my incognito. I tried to hide my anxiety behind the mask of exuberant hilarity, and generally managed to lead the conversation on to some irrelevant subject. But I found out afterwards that these harmless folks never dreamed of unmasking me. In their absolute ignorance of Europeanism they

had never for a moment doubted the genuineness of my Effendi character. Fortunately, precautionary measures were only necessary when I was in a town, in Bokhara or Samarkand, for amongst the country folks and the nomads, the latter of whom had never seen a European face to face, they were quite superfluous. The successful preservation of my incognito among these simple children of Nature made me indulge in the wildest flights of fancy. I remember one mad idea, the impracticability of which did not at all strike me at the time, but which must now seem ridiculous to everybody, even to myself. I had reached the height of my reputation with the Turkomans of the Gorghen and the Atrek. They looked upon me as a saint from distant Rum (the west); young and old flocked round me to receive a blessing, or even a sacred breath, as a preservative against diseases. One day an old grey-beard, who had spent his whole life in plunder and murder, discreetly advanced towards me, and in all earnest made me the following proposition: "Sheikh (my Sheikh)," he said, "why do you not place yourself at the head of a great plundering expedition? Under your blessed guidance we might organise an attack on a large scale into heretic Shiite (Persia). I am good for 5,000 lances; steeled heroes and fiery horses could do much with Allah's help, and assisted by a Fatiha (prayer) from you." Now the reader will naturally suppose that I treated this proposal as a huge joke. Nothing

of the kind. The words of the old Turkoman wolf did not sound at all absurd to me ; they only required a little consideration. I thought of the unexampled cowardice and state of confusion of the Persian army, and knowing the wild impetuosity, the rapaciousness, and the audacity of the Turkomans, one of whom was a match for ten Persians, the thought flashed through my brain, "Stop, why not undertake this romantic exploit? All the way from Sharud the Persian frontiers are exposed ; 5,000 Turkomans can easily take the field against 10,000 Persians and more. And where will the Shah find so many soldiers all in a hurry? In Teheran I shall find some adventurous Italian and French officers who will probably like to join me. In any case an attack upon the capital can be successfully accomplished, and who knows, I might possess myself of the Persian throne if only for a few days!" The fact that it would be no easy matter to keep 5,000 Turkomans within the bounds of discipline, and that in the face of European politics my success would at best be but a midsummer night's dream—all this troubled me not one whit ; so deeply had I plunged into the atmosphere of mediæval life around me, and so far did my heated fancy carry me back into the regions of past ages!

In places where my incognito had to stand the test with people who, on their journeys through India and Turkey, had come into contact with

Europeans, I had the hardest battle to fight, and was often in great danger. There I was not treated with the humble reverence and admiration which is due to a foreign Hadji and divine. On the contrary, they questioned me about my nationality, the aim and object of my journey, and even the fittest and readiest answers could not banish their suspicion and doubt. In this respect my adventure with the Afghan on the journey to Khiva will ever remain vivid in my mind. He was a Kandahari who, during the British occupation of 1840, had escaped the English criminal law; he had spent some time in the Afghan colony on the Caspian Sea, and afterwards had wandered about for many years in Khiva. He would insist that, in spite of my knowledge of the languages of Islam, I was a disguised European, and therefore a dangerous spy. At first I treated him with every possible mark of respect and politeness; I flattered his vanity, but all in vain. The scoundrel would not be taken off his guard, and one evening I overheard him say to the Kervanbashi (head of the caravan): "I bet you he is a Frenghi or a Russian spy, and with his pencil he makes a note of all the mountains and valleys, all the streams and springs, so that the Russians can later on come into the land without a guide to rob you of your flocks and children. In Khiva, thanks to the precautions of the Khan, the rack will do its part, and the red-hot iron will soon show what sort of metal he is made of." Never to

move a muscle under such amiable discourses, or to betray one's feelings by any uneasy expression in one's eye, that mighty mirror of the soul, is, in truth, no easy task. I managed, however, to preserve my cold indifference on this and similar occasions; but one evening, during our passage through the Steppe, the Afghan was quietly smoking his opium pipe in the night camp. By the glimmer of the coals on his water-pipe I met his dull, intoxicated gaze, and a diabolical idea took possession of me. "This man is planning my destruction, and he can effect it; shall I throw one of my strychnine pills into his dish of tea, which he is even now holding in his shaky hand? I could thus save myself, and accomplish my purpose." A horrible thought which reminds one of Eugene Aram in Bulwer's novel. I took the pill from the wadding of my cloak, and held it for some time between my fingers close to the edge of the dish. The deadly silence of the night and the opium fumes which held this man under their spell seemed to favour my devilish scheme, but when in my distraction I gazed upwards and saw the brilliantly shining canopy of heaven, the magic beauty of the stars overmastered me; the first rays of the rising moon fell upon me—I stayed my hand, ashamed of meditating a deed unworthy of a civilised man, and quickly hid the fateful pill again in the lining of my Dervish cloak.

The continuance of my dangerous position eased

my task in some respects, and custom makes many things bearable. Practice had taught me to sit still for hours, immovable like a statue, perhaps just moving my lips as if in silent prayer, while the spies sent to Bokhara to find me out, freely discussed my identity, and speculated upon the enigma of my nationality and my faith. The danger of growing red or pale, or of betraying my internal struggle by a look, had long since ceased for me. I had so thoroughly accustomed myself to my character of pseudo-Dervish, that the emotions connected with the pious demeanour of those individuals came quite spontaneously to me. When my companions of the Steppe consulted the oracle of stones or sticks about the issue of our dangerous campaign through the Khalata desert, I stooped down as curious as the rest, and watched the configuration of the stones or sticks as anxiously as the superstitious natives. They had even assigned to me a greater power of divination than to any of the others, and hearkened diligently to my explanation. When, arrived at the grave of the native saint, Bahaeddin, near Bokhara, we performed the customary prayers, I could hold out with my fellow-travellers from eight in the morning till late at night. I prayed, sang, shouted aloud, groaned, and raved in pious contrition with the best of them. I wonder even now whence I procured the uninterrupted flow of tears which I shed on those occasions, and how I could play my part in this comedy for hours together with-

out betraying the slightest emotion or perturbation. I must confess that Nature has endowed me with a fair dose of mimicry, a quality which Napoleon III. once in a conversation commended me for. From my earliest youth I had learned to imitate the outward expression of various kinds of people ; thus I had accustomed myself to wear alternately the mask of Jew, Christian, Sunnite, and Shiite, although any form of positive religion was objectionable to me. I believe, however, it was not so much my mimetic faculty as the instinct of self-preservation and the consciousness of ever-present danger which enabled me to bring my venturesome experiment to a satisfactory end. The fear of death is at all times a hideous beast, which glares at us and shows its teeth, and although one may get used to its presence in course of time, and even become blunted and hardened, yet this monster, fear of death, never quite loses its influence over us, and if we are blest with a strong nervous system, we can in the face of it do almost impossible things.

It would lead me too far were I to dwell here upon some of the exciting and critical incidents of my incognito, examples of which have been given in my earlier works. It has often been laid to my charge by conscientious critics that I have been too reserved, too brief, in the accounts of my travels. So, for instance, the learned Jules Mohl writes¹ : "M. Vambéry est un voyageur singulièrement modeste,

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, March-April, 1865, p. 371.

qui ne raconte de ses aventures que ce qui est indispensable à son histoire, et l'impression que donne son ouvrage est, qu'il ne raconte pas tout ce qui lui arrive." In my *Sketches of Central Asia* I have entered a little more into details, but even they are far from exhaustive. The compass of an autobiography is likewise too small for this. Self-glorification does not please me, and where I have occasionally been a little more circumstantial in my narrative, it has been for the purpose of lessening the surprise which my incognito travels called forth in Europe, by showing the reasons for and the natural effects of certain things. Many well-disposed critics even have doubted the verity of some of my experiences, which to the European *pursang* are simply incredible. But those who have read the story of my childhood and early youth, who realise that up to my eighteenth year I hardly ever knew what it was to have enough to eat, that I went about insufficiently clothed and exposed to miseries of all sorts, will not see in my adventures anything so very marvellous. From a very early age I have had to act contrary to my inner convictions; in religion, in society, in politics, I have often had to pretend in order to attain my object. Nothing is more natural than that when in Central Asia I had to fight with want and distress, with perplexities of every form and shape, I should come out victorious. No European before me has ever attempted to assume the incognito of a mendi-

cant friar, for Burckhardt, Burton, and Snouck Hurgronje in Mecca, Wolff and Burnes in Bokhara, and Conolly in the Turkoman Steppes, travelled as Asiatics with plenty of means, or in an official character. Few, no doubt, have had such bodily fatigues to bear, but few, perhaps none, of my colleagues have gone through such a hard school in their tender childhood. The conventional modesty of scholars and writers has always been irksome to me, for virtue in the garb of a lie is disgusting. I speak quite openly and honestly when I say that my adventures in Central Asia will appear little remarkable if regarded as the continuation of my experiences in Turkey and Persia on an intensified scale ; and these latter, again, were in form and character closely allied to my struggles and trials as a little Jew boy, a mendicant student, and a private tutor. I have often been asked how I could bear the constant fear of death, and if I were not sometimes overcome by the thought of certain destruction. But one can accustom one's self to a life in constant fear of death as well as to anything else. It has disturbed me only when the crisis came all too suddenly, and I had no time to collect my thoughts and plan means of escape. Such was the case when, in the Khalata Steppe, I was near dying of thirst, and being in a high fever I swooned. Then, again, at the time of my audience with the Emir at Samarkand, one of the court officials touched the nape of my neck, and remarked to his

companion, "Unfortunately I have left my knife at home to-day," which may have been quite a casual remark. On the whole I have preserved my equanimity, nay, even my cheerfulness, in the most critical moments, for high-spirited youth does not easily give way to despair; it has a store of confidence which only disease or age can diminish.



The Return to Europe



CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN TO EUROPE

I HAD now become thoroughly accustomed to my *rôle* of mendicant friar, and the severe physical and mental exertions I had undergone should have prepared and fitted me for a yet more serious journey of discovery. And yet, strange to say, when I heard at Samarkand from my Kashgar travelling companions that it would be no easy matter, nay, practically impossible, for me to proceed to Khiva—because of the political disturbances there—I was not altogether sorry. The frustration of my plans was unpleasant, but I was not inconsolable. The fatigues I had undergone had affected me to such an extent that the prospect of an overland journey to Peking and back across the Kun-lun to India did not strike me as quite so delightful as it had done before. To tread in the footsteps of Marco Polo, and to return home illumined by the aureole which surrounded the great Venetian; for me, a lame beggar, to have accomplished the greatest overland journey of modern

times—all this had stimulated my ambition for a while, but a tired, weary body affects the spirit also, ambition becomes languid and in default of this most energising medium the desire for action also fails. After I had escaped from my dangerous adventure with the Emir of Bokhara, and my fellow-travellers had committed me to the care of a company of pilgrims on their way to Mecca, I realised for the first time what a fortunate escape I had had, and my thankfulness rose in proportion as I left Samarkand behind and approached the south-west of Asia. I speak of deliverance, but as a matter of fact on this return journey I laboured under the same constant sense of suspicion, perhaps even in an increased measure ; and was exposed to all the miseries of the approaching rough season and the perceptible coldness of my new travelling companions. Now, indeed, I had to drink the last dregs of my cup of suffering ; now I experienced the bitterest and most painful moments of the whole of my journey ; for what I suffered from hunger, cold, and exhaustion between Samarkand and Meshed surpasses all description, and would scarcely be credited by European readers.

The population of the stretch of land between the Oxus and Herat forms, as far as their culture is concerned, a kind of medium between the Moslemic-fanatical Bokhariots and the partly or wholly nomadic, in some things still primitive, tribes of Central Asia. These people are harassed on the

one side by the tyrannical arbitrariness of their Government, and on the other by the lawlessness and rapacity of the dwellers of the Steppes. Great and pressing poverty and distress of every description have crushed all human feeling and faith out of them; and when the pilgrims passing through now and then receive an obolus from them this is not due to any pious motives, but entirely in obedience to the ancient laws of hospitality. My beads, talismans, benedictions, and similar baubles were of no use to me here. These people had a look as if they wanted to be good, but could not, and I, with not a penny in my pocket, was often nearly driven to distraction. What were the times of starvation at Presburg, or the miseries of an empty stomach in the wretched house of the Three Drums Street in Budapest, compared to the sufferings and the forlornness on the way south of the Oxus? The only pleasant memory left to me of those days is the kindness I received from Rahmet Bi, a trusty chamberlain, and afterwards Minister to the Emir of Bokhara, in Kerki on the Oxus, which has since become Russian. This man, of whom more later on, seemed to have guessed my incognito, and for some time could not make up his mind whether to betray me or to follow the promptings of his kindly heart. The latter triumphed; but to this day I do not know how or why. At any rate he quieted the suspicions of the Governor of Kerki on my account, and helped me safely over the

frontiers. If I am not mistaken, the poetic Muse had a hand in Rahmet Bi's friendliness towards me. He sometimes wrote Persian verses, and was delighted when he could read them to me and gain my approbation.

Among the warlike, rapacious, and wildly fanatic Afghans I have never found a trace of any one like Rahmet Bi. He not only treated me with marked friendliness during our sojourn in Kerki, where he had a mission to the Ersari Turkomans, but he also gave me a letter of safe-conduct in Persian for eventual use in Central Asia. As a curiosity I here insert this document in the original with translation:—

Text.

“Maalum bude bashed ki darende khatt duagui djenabi aali Hadji Molla Abdurreshid rumi ez berai Ziareti buzurgani Bokharai Sherif we Samarkand firdus manend amede, buzurganra zialet numude, djenabi aalira dua kerde baz bewatani khod mirefte est. Ez djenab Emir ul Muminin we Imam ul Muslimin nishan mubarek der dest dashte est. Baed ki der rah we reste bahadji mezkur kesi mudakhele nenumude her kudam muwafiki hal izaz we ikram hadji mezkuna bedja arend. Nuwishte be shehr Safar 1280 (1863).”

Translation.

“Be it known, that the holder of this letter, the

high-born Hadji Abdurreshid, from Turkey, has come hither with the intention of making a pilgrimage to the graves of the saints in noble Bokhara and in paradisiacal Samarkand. After accomplishing his pilgrimage to the graves of the saints, and having paid homage to his Highness the Emir, he returns to his home. He is in possession of a writing (passport) from his Highness the Sovereign of all true believers and the Imam of all Moslems (the Sultan); it is therefore seemly that the said Hadji should not be inconvenienced by any one, neither on the journey nor at any station, but that every one as he is able should honour and respect him.

“Written in the month of Safar, in the year 1280.”

Thus I was safe on Bokharan soil, and also on the journey through Maimene up to the Persian frontiers. From there, however, and for the rest of the way, I was constantly watched with Argus eyes, and had to endure the most trying fatigues. During my stay at Herat, which lasted for several weeks, I had to sleep in the shivering cold autumn nights on the bare ground, and in the literal sense of the word begged my bread from the fanatical Shiites or the niggardly Afghans, who frequently instead of bread gave me invectives, and often struck me, the supposed Frengghi, or threatened me with death. Even now I shudder when I think of the vile food

on which I had to feed and the angry looks these people cast upon me, whom by command of the young Emir they dare not insult, but whom they hated from the bottom of their hearts.

When I think upon the Ghazi attacks in North India, so frequent even in our days, in which some fanatical Afghan calmly murders the harmless Englishman he happens to come across, simply to gain paradise by killing a Kafir, it seems a veritable marvel that I escaped with my life. Every Afghan who came past my cell glared at me with angry eyes. To shoot me would have passed as a virtue, but fortunately their anger did not vent itself in deeds.

This secret wrathfulness manifested itself most strongly on the journey from Herat to Meshhed, when the hard-hearted Afghans, wrapped in their thick fur-coats, took a special delight in seeing me spend the night in my light clothing without any covering, hungry, and with chattering teeth. In spite of all my sufferings and privations I did not give way however, but, regardless of hunger and cold, I always remained cheerful, and I attribute this chiefly to my excitement at the successful accomplishment of my adventure, for once on Persian soil I expected to be safe from all danger.

The charm of this consciousness was so strong and effective that for days together, both after my arrival at Meshhed and on the tedious marches

through Khorasan, I lived in a constant fever of excitement; and the farther the horrible spectres of past dangers dwindled away in the distance, *i.e.*, the nearer I came to Teheran, where I should find the first European colony, the louder throbbed my heart, and the more vivid became the enchanting pictures of future renown on the rosy horizon of my fancy. Whether this joyous excitement was proportionate to the actual results of my adventurous enterprise, and whether the reward was worth all the trouble, I never stopped to consider then. It was enough for me that I was the first European to have advanced from the south coast of the Caspian Sea through the Hyrcanian desert to Khiva, from there through the sandy plains of the Khalata to Bokhara, and from thence to Herat. I knew that the specimens of the East Turkish languages and the manuscripts I had collected were unknown to the scientific world of Europe, and would give me the character of an explorer and specialist in Turkology, and finally I was not a little proud of the manner in which I had travelled, always under the impression that my intimate intercourse with the various tribes of inner Asia, so far but little or imperfectly known, must yield an abundant harvest of ethnographical knowledge. Indeed, had I been a professional philologist and linguist, trade, industry, and politics, geography as well as ethnography, could not have captivated my attention to the same extent, and I could not have obtained all

this practical knowledge of inner Asia, keenly interested as I was in the destiny of these far-away nations. If it had struck me that, owing to my very deficient education, much had been neglected and passed by unnoticed, that, for instance, I had not a notion of geology, and was absolutely useless on geographical grounds; that I could not have rendered any assistance in these, even had I had the knowledge, because I only carried a little bit of pencil hidden in the lining of my coat, and consequently that my services to geography and natural science in general were of the vaguest and most problematic character—had I realised all this the temperature of my exultation would have fallen considerably. But all such thoughts remained down at the bottom of the ocean of my bliss; and so now, after an existence of thirty-one years in this world, for the first time in my life the golden fruit of realised success and the sweet reward after hard labour beckoned to me from the distance, and filled me with ecstasy and blissful anticipation. The long, weary stretch from Meshhed to Teheran I accomplished in mid-winter; two horses were at my disposal, for the Governor of Meshhed, Prince Hussam es Saltana, had furnished me with the necessary means, and throughout all this journey my mind was full of joy and anticipation. My Osbeg attendant, who from Khiva had accompanied me, and through weal and woe had been faithful to me, was not a little surprised at this metamorphosis

in my behaviour. For hours together I used to sing songs or airs from favourite operas, which the good lad took for holy hymns of the Western Islam. He was highly pleased to see the Dervish of the West in such a pious frame of mind, and often as I warbled my operas he accompanied me in his nasal tone, fully under the impression that they were Moslem songs of praise or pious hymns. Such a duet has not often been heard, I believe. Thus it came about that during the four weeks occupied by this ride from Meshhed to Teheran—a ride which exhausts even the most hardened traveller—I was always full of good-humour. Physically I was worn out, even to the extent of being unrecognisable, but mentally uplifted and full of elasticity when I made my entry into the Persian capital.

The kindly reception accorded me in Meshhed by Colonel Dolmage had shown me that in Asia Europeans are not separated by any national wall of partition, but, united in a common bond of Western fraternity, share each other's weal and woe; and on my arrival in the Persian capital I was still firmer convinced of this bond of unity. The news of my fortunate escape from the hands of the Central Asiatic tyrants had been received by all the European colony with equal pleasure. Young and old, rich and poor, high diplomatists and modest craftsmen—all the Europeans in Teheran, in fact—wanted to see and to welcome

me ; and few could repress their sympathy when they saw the gay and lively young Hungarian of former days so sadly changed and fallen off. From my letter to the Turkish Embassy, written in the Turkoman Steppe, they had heard of my safe arrival in this dangerous robbers' den. But after that no further intelligence had been received. No wonder that in the Persian capital the wildest rumours about my imprisonment, execution, and miserable end were circulated and believed. Pilgrims from Middle Asia, who confused my identity with that of some Italian silk merchants captured in Bokhara before my arrival there, related the most horrible details of the martyr's death I had undergone. Some had seen me hanging by my feet ; others declared that I had been thrown down from the tower of the citadel ; others again had been eye-witnesses when the executioner quartered me and threw my limbs to the dogs to eat. As Bokhara was known to be the hotbed of the most consummate barbarities and cruelties, these tales were easily believed by the Europeans in Teheran, and now, on my return, hale and hearty, but with the indisputable marks of excessive sufferings upon me, every one's sympathy went out to me. All strove to show me attention and to please me in some way or other. The various Legations invited me to festive dinners. The English Envoy, Sir Charles Alison, asked me to write an account of my travels, and gave me

official recommendations to Lord Palmerston, Lord Strangford, Sir Justin Sheil, Sir H. Rawlinson, and other political and scientific notabilities in London, which were of great service to me, and largely influenced my further career. M. von Giers, then Russian Ambassador at Teheran, and afterwards Imperial Chancellor, urged me to go to Petersburg, because he thought that my Turkestan experiences would be most appreciated on the Neva. At the Russian Legation they drew a picture of my future career in the most brilliant colours, and when I pointed out that life in those severely autocratic spheres would be incompatible with my nationality and political opinions, these diplomatists came to the conclusion that I was too naïve, and, in spite of the hard school I had gone through, still remained an enthusiast.

Teheran, indeed, was the centre of important decisions for me. Had I listened to the persuasions of the Russians, who knows what position I might not be occupying at present in the administration of Turkestan? Of course it was out of the question for me to turn my footsteps northward. All the treasures and all the glory of the Czar's dominions would never help me to conquer the feeling of dislike which from a child I had had against the oppressor of my fatherland and all its national policy, the personification of despotism and unbridled absolutism. With all the more readiness I accepted the introductions given me by

the English ; for this nation, with its glorious literature and liberal ideas, had long since become dear to me ; and as, moreover, in the East I had found them the only worthy representatives of the West, it will seem quite natural that in Teheran I had already made up my mind what course to pursue in Europe, and made London the final aim of my journey to the West.

At Teheran I rested for about three months from the fatigues of my Central Asiatic expedition. During that time, and while it was all yet fresh in my mind, I completed and supplemented the pencil-notes secretly taken on the journey and written on odd bits of paper in the Hungarian tongue, but with Arabic characters to avoid detection. I even mapped out an account of my travels, which I intended to publish in England. I built the most delightful castles in the air, and revelled in the glorious colouring of the pictures of my imagination, without, however, having the slightest conception of how to create for myself a decided career built upon solid foundations. It was enough for me that I had become acquainted with districts and places in the Asiatic world which no European before me had ever set eyes on, but how and where I was to turn this knowledge to the best account never once entered my mind in the excessive joy of my successful campaign. And I could not in any case have come to any satisfactory conclusion on this head, for, in the first place, I was not quite sure yet

as to the best ways and means of disposing of my knowledge ; in the second, I was somewhat doubtful as to my literary accomplishments ; and in the third, I had not yet made up my mind in which language to write.

In the tumult of my exultation the one certain, joyful prospect that rose up before me was that my successful expedition would gain me European fame and honour, and secure for me a position in life, but of what nature this position was to be I knew not, and cared not. All I wanted was to get to Europe now as soon as possible ; first go home to Hungary and report myself to the Academy at Pest, and then place the account of my wanderings before the European public.

As soon as the fine weather set in I left the Persian capital to return to Trebizond by the same way by which I had come, viz., Tebriz and Erzerum. Full of anxiety, apprehension, and uncertainty as my journey here had been, equally full of joy and delightful anticipation was my journey back to the Black Sea. In quick day marches I passed the different stations. The formerly toilsome journey was now mere child's play to my body inured against fatigues. It was an exciting pleasure-ride which the warm reception of my European friends in Tebriz made into a veritable triumphal march. Warm welcomes, banquets, laudations, and undisguised appreciation of

my adventure were my greeting. Swiss, French, Germans, English, and Italians—all were proud that a lame European had actually been amongst the kidnapping Turkomans and the wildly fanatical Central Asiatics; and glad that through his discoveries this hitherto obscure portion of the Old World was brought within the reach of Western lands. Besides the account of my journey which I had sent from Teheran to the President of the Hungarian Academy, the diplomatic representatives at Teheran officially acquainted their various Governments with my doings, and sent off innumerable letters to European newspapers. The fame of my successful expedition thus preceded me, and when I came to Constantinople I was presented to the Austrian Internuncio (Count Prokesh-Orten) and the Grand-Vizier (Ali Pasha), who both seemed to know all about me. Their warm reception and the lively interest they manifested in the concerns of the hitherto closed districts of inner Asia showed me their appreciation of the work I had done. After my late experiences, Constantinople, where I delayed only for a few hours, seemed to me the flower of Western civilisation. I went by one of Lloyd's steamers, *viâ* Kustendji-Czernawoda on the Danube, to Pest, where I arrived in the first half of May, 1864.

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings at sight of my beloved fatherland. My pen would be unequal to interpret the emotions which I ex-

perienced as I trod once again the soil of the land for which I had undergone so much. It was to find out its early history that I had first been induced to start on this dangerous expedition ; for, as already mentioned, the national beginnings of my native land had from my earliest youth stirred within me a feeling of curiosity, to satisfy which I had faced the dangers and privations now safely over. Arrived in Pest, I left the boat at the Suspension Bridge and, accompanied by the Tartar whom I had brought from Khiva as a living proof of my sojourn in foreign parts, I sped towards the Hôtel de l'Europe. My joy knew no bounds, and it never struck me that my home-coming was just as lonely and unobserved as my departure had been some years ago. When in after years I witnessed the receptions granted in London to Livingstone, Speke and Grant, Palgrave, Burton, and, above all, to Stanley—receptions in which the whole nation took part, of which the newspapers were full weeks and months beforehand, a special train meeting the traveller, who was feasted as if he were a national hero—and when I saw how even in Vienna, where travellers as a rule are not the heroes of the day, officers like Payer and Weyprecht were celebrated on their return from the North Pole—it pained me to think upon my own gloomy, lonely home-coming, and the lamentable indifference of my compatriots. Even in the circle of the Academy, whose delegate I had been, my successfully accomplished

undertaking seemed to rouse no interest ; for, when at the next Monday's meeting, I entered the hall of the Academy only the noble, highly-cultured secretary, Mr. Ladislaus Szalay, and my high-minded patron, Baron Eötvös, warmly embraced me and expressed their pleasure at my fortunate escape. They indeed did all they could to make up for the neglect of the others. Hungary was just then passing through the sad period of Austrian absolutism. The nation languished in the bonds of this autocracy. There was no sign of public life or social vitality. Every one's hopes and expectations were fixed on the restoration of the national Government and the reconciliation with Austria ; and although Asia, from the historical point of view of the old Magyars, might be of some interest, geographical and ethnographical researches and the opening out of the hitherto almost unknown portion of the old world could have no special attractions for Hungary just then. He who longs for bread requires no dainties to tempt the palate, and a nation sorely troubled about its political existence and its future can scarcely be blamed if all efforts are in the first place directed towards the regaining of its constitutional rights and national independence, and if it pays more attention to culture and the improvement of science in general than to geographical and ethnographical discoveries in distant lands.

At the time of my home-coming Hungary had reached but the first stage of internal administration.

The Academy, the only national institution which had escaped the Argus eye of absolutism, had rather a political and national than a purely scientific character, and the society desirous for the restitution of its constitutional rights naturally felt more drawn towards the enlightened, more advanced nations of Western lands than towards the obscure districts of the Oxus and their inhabitants. Even in Germany, the home of strictly scientific pursuits, my travels had attracted less attention than in England and Russia, where both political and commercial interests directed the attention of the Government towards these regions, and where a more intimate knowledge of those hitherto inaccessible regions seemed urgently needed.

Therefore, to be perfectly fair and honest, and allowing for the all-pervading interest in the political questions of the day, I had perhaps very little or no cause at all to feel hurt at the coldness and indifference shown to my travels, or to see in it an intentional non-appreciation of my services. But in my despondency, and with the still vivid memory of my reception by the European colonies in Persia and Turkey, a more sober, dispassionate view seemed impossible, and I broke down altogether. The first days of my stay in Pest were bitterly disappointing. I said to myself: "Is this the reward for all I have gone through, all I have suffered? is this the gratitude of a nation in quest of whose origin I have risked my life? this

the appreciation of the Academy which I trust has been benefited by my researches?" Thus rudely awakened out of the happy dreams which had been my companions on the homeward journey, I felt bruised and hurt, and my vanity was wounded. To see those beautiful pictures—which my fancy had conjured up, and which had cheered and encouraged me under the greatest privations and in hours of peril—thus mercilessly shivered and dispelled, was indeed one of the most painful experiences of my life. For hours together I brooded over this in my lonely room in the Hôtel de l'Europe. I would not and could not believe that it was actually true, and the wound was all the more sore and irritating as I found myself, after all these years of struggle and exertion, in exactly the same position as before—that is, I was no nearer the solution of the question how to secure a position for myself.

Some advised me to resume the official career I had abandoned in Constantinople ; others suggested that I should apply for a professorship in Oriental languages at the Pest University, which would be the easier to obtain since the position of lector had become vacant through the death of Dr. Repiczky. The former of these suggestions was not at all to my taste, for after my adventures, the East had but little attraction for me. Even when on the spot and at the very source of Oriental thought, and beholding the steady decay of the Asiatic world, I clung the more passionately to the

energetic life of the West. The professorship seemed a little more attractive, as, before all things, I longed for rest, and I hoped in that capacity to find leisure to work out the linguistic and ethnographical results of my travels. Unfortunately the procuring of a professorial chair in those days was beset with grave difficulties for me. Hungary was ruled from Vienna, and in that centre of administration I, being on intimate terms with the Hungarian emigrants of the East, and never having felt much sympathy for Austria, could hardly expect to find friends and promoters of my interests.

So neither of these two suggestions seemed practicable; and as my English friends in Teheran had advised me to publish the account of my travels in London, and to this effect had liberally supplied me with introductions to different ranks and classes of society in the British metropolis, I soon made up my mind to go to England, and to appear before the London Geographical Society, the best known forum of Asiatic travel. Possibly another reason also induced me to decide upon this plan. After a four weeks' rest the desire for travel was again upon me, and the hopelessness and weariness of my existence made me long for change and adventure. I decided to go, the sooner the better, and, turning away from the field of Eastern vicissitudes, to plunge into the full stream of Western life and action. Very well; but this also was more easily said than done. Travel in the East requires but a knowledge of the

languages and the customs, while money is more often dangerous than helpful ; but in the West it is just the reverse ; and as I had come to Pest devoid of all means, I had a great deal of trouble in collecting the necessary funds to defray my travelling expenses to London. The bitterness of my feelings was not improved thereby. In vain I asked my supposed friends for a small loan, in vain I promised fourfold repayment, in vain I pointed out the advantages which my appearance in the cultured West would confer upon the nation ; deaf ears everywhere. The coolness with which my various travelling experiences were received raised doubts in many minds. Ignorance is the mother of suspicion, and as many people thought my adventures fantastic and exaggerated no one cared to advance me any money ; and there I stood in my native land more forlorn and helpless than in the wildest regions of Central Asia.

Thanks to the intervention of my noble patron, Baron Eötvös, Count Emil Desewffy, President of the Academy, was at last persuaded to advance me a few hundred florins from the Library Fund of the Society—a helping hand indeed in my sore necessity, if only that hand in taking me by the arm had not left behind black stains which for ever have disfigured this deed of charity. The money was given me on condition that I should deposit my Oriental manuscripts, the treasured results of my travels, with the president, and praiseworthy as

this precaution and zeal for the property of the Academy on the part of the noble president may seem, it had a most injurious and mortifying effect upon me. When I took my bagful of manuscripts to the Count's house I could not help remarking, "So you do not believe me; you take me for a vagabond without any feeling of honour; you think that I take the money of the Academy and do not mean to pay it back—I who have been slaving and suffering for the good of the Academy as few have done before me, and who now as the fruit of my researches want to see the Hungarian nation—hitherto almost unknown on the world's literary stage—recognised as a fellow-labourer in the great harvest field of European culture! I, the fanatical enthusiast, have to give a guarantee for a paltry few florins!" No, it was too much; I felt grievously hurt and my patriotism had been deeply wounded. One may imagine that I was not in the most amiable frame of mind as I left the city for which I had yearned so many years, and if the hope of recognition in England had not buoyed me up, the black spectre of disappointment would have been still blacker. And, I ask the kind reader, was it strange that I began to think that all this humiliation and mistrust, all this cruel misapprehension, and this wilful ignoring of all my trouble and labour was due to my obscure origin and the ill-fated star of my Jewish descent? This hypothesis may possibly be a mistaken one, for I believe that true

Magyar explorers of Christian faith would have fared no better in the intellectual morass of the Hungary of those days. But the painful suspicion was there, and could not easily be banished.

With my modest viaticum, lent to me on security, I was soon on the way, and on the journey from Pest to London I fortunately received many tokens of a favourable turn in my affairs. In Vienna I gathered from the notices about me in the daily papers that my journey had created a good deal of interest. At home jealous, narrow-minded people, even from the Academy circle, had published scornful remarks about me on the day after my arrival, and amongst other things blamed me for appearing in the Academy hall with my fez on, not considering that, being used to the heavy turban, my head had to get gradually used to the lighter covering of Europe. But the foreign papers were enthusiastic in their praise and appreciation of my endeavours. In my progress Westward these good signs gradually increased. At Cologne I was interviewed by the *Kölnische Zeitung*; and in the railway carriage from Dover to London my travelling companions were interested to hear of the purpose of my journey, and one of these was a man whose identity has remained a mystery to me to this day. He was a Mr. *Smith* according to his card, and seemed so pleased to make my acquaintance that on our arrival in the capital he took me to the Hotel Victoria, engaged a splendid

room for me, and that evening and the next day entertained me with regal hospitality. Then he found a private house for me, and, as I afterwards learned, paid the first month's rent for me. After he had seen me comfortably settled this kind-hearted man took leave of me. Who was this Mr. Smith? From that day till now I have not been able to find out. I have never seen him again. And indeed his was a deed of charity. But for him how should I have managed in this English Babel, with my small means and absolute ignorance of Western ways and customs.

When I had become somewhat familiar with the British metropolis I presented my letters of introduction to Sir Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society; Sir Henry Rawlinson, the greatest authority on Central Asiatic affairs; Sir Henry A. Layard, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Sir Justin Sheil, former Ambassador at Teheran, and last, but not least, Lord Strangford, the great authority on the Moslemic East. All gave me a hearty welcome, and interrogated me upon the details of my travels and the condition of things in Central Asia. Pleased as I was with the interest shown by these experts, I was not a little surprised to find everywhere, instead of the anticipated ice-crust of English etiquette a hearty and sincere appreciation of my labours. I realised at once that here I was in my element, and that I had hit upon the best market

for the publication of my travelling experiences. And how could it be otherwise? England, with its widespread colonies, with its gigantic universal trade, and its lively interest in anything that happens in the remotest corners of the earth, England is, and remains, the only land of great, universal ideas. Here the fostering of geographical and ethnographical knowledge is closely connected with the commercial, political, and national concerns of the people, and as with the wide view they take of things the question of practical usefulness triumphs over petty national jealousies, it is quite natural that the Britishers do not trouble themselves about the origin and antecedents of their heroes; and in the case of the Frenchman, German, or Hungarian who happens to have enriched their knowledge of lands and peoples, gladly forget the title of "foreigner," otherwise not particularly liked in England. I noticed all this during the first few days of my stay in England, and necessarily this prominent feature of the English national character came later on even more strikingly and, in my case, advantageously to the foreground. With the exception of one small, rather amusing episode, there was not the slightest hitch in my reception. My strongly sunburnt face, but more still my thorough knowledge of Persian and Turkish, which I spoke without the slightest accent, made some people suspicious as to my European, *i.e.*, Hungarian descent. Some Orientalists would take me

for a disguised Asiatic, and for some time they withheld their confidence, but when General Kmetty, a countryman of mine, then living in London, who had known me in Constantinople, allayed their doubts their appreciation was all the greater, and two weeks after my arrival on the banks of the Thames I had quite a crowd of friends and acquaintances, who spread my fame by word of mouth and pen, and transformed the former Dervish suddenly into a celebrity and a lion of London society.

This episode is not without its comical side, and shows how an inborn talent for languages, or rather for talking, may deceive even the cleverest expert in finding out people's nationalities. In Asia they took me for a Turk, a Persian, or Central Asiatic, and very seldom for a European. Here in Europe they thought I was a disguised Persian or Osmanli, such is the curious sport of ethnical location !

I made my *début* by a lecture at Burlington House, under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, before a large and select audience. Here I delivered my first speech in English, with a strong foreign accent, as the *Times* remarked next day, but still I spoke for an hour and made myself understood. From that evening dates my title of "Explorer," and with it came a considerable change in my material condition. Instead of having to seek a publisher, I was literally overrun by men of the craft and inundated with offers. Absolutely

inexperienced as I was in such matters, I took advice with my friends, and Lord Strangford decided this momentous question for me, and very kindly introduced me to John Murray, rightly called the "prince of publishers." A short conversation with him settled the whole matter. The contract was simply that after deducting the printing costs I was to receive half of the nett proceeds, and when the first edition was sold I should have the right to make other arrangements. These conditions seemed bad enough, but as Lord Strangford said, it was not so much the question now to make money by it as to get my book introduced into society ; and as Murray only published the intellectual products of the fashionable world, my connection with him would be to my advantage in other ways, that is, it would serve as an introduction to society. For England, the land of strict formalities and outward appearances, this view was perfectly correct. The publishing offices in Albemarle Street, where Murray had his business place then, were known as the literary forum of the *élite*. The Queen was at that time in negotiation with Mr. Murray about the publication of the late Prince Consort's Memoirs, and Lord Derby was publishing his translation of Homer with him. Any dealings with this house raised the author at once to the position of a gentleman, even if they did not provide him with the means to act as such. When my arrangements

with Murray were completed and he said, "You can draw upon me," I seemed all at once changed from a beggar into a Cræsus. I accepted his offer and at once drew a cheque for £50, followed later on by larger amounts, and this sudden transformation of my financial position very nearly turned my brain. Fortunately my friends explained to me just in time that this offer of the publisher's was a mere act of courtesy, that I must not build any false hopes upon it, that it would have its limits, and that I should not really know how I stood until the first accounts were squared.

In my excess of joy I had given but little thought to this important question. One must have been in the rushing stream of London high-life, one must have gone through the everlasting feastings, the dinners, luncheons, parties, balls, &c., which fall to the lot of a society lion during the so-called "season," to understand how little time one has for thinking, and how a constant intercourse with millionaires makes one fancy one's self in possession of inexhaustible wealth. Day after day the post brought piles of invitations to lunch, or dinner, races, hunting-parties, visits to beautiful country-houses, and all imaginable pleasures and recreations. Hardly a tenth part of the people who thus offered me hospitality I knew personally. I was received everywhere as a friend and old acquaintance, and overwhelmed with attentions of all sorts. One recommended

me to another, and the draconic law of fashion made it everybody's imperative duty to entertain the stranger who was about to publish in England the result of his perilous travels, and give England the first benefit of them, and in this manner to show him the gratitude of the nation.

I do not doubt that underlying all this there was a strong dose of snobbishness, in which England excels, an aping of the great and the wealthy and the highly cultured, for I am certain that many of my entertainers had but very vague notions about Central Asia. Nevertheless expressions of appreciation of my toils and labours, even if they were speculations upon ulterior benefits on the part of my hosts, could not leave me quite indifferent; in fact they took a most astonishing hold of me. When I saw with what fervour Livingstone was received on his second return from Africa, how anonymous patrons placed large sums at his disposal, and how patiently his curious whims and tempers were put up with; when I witnessed the part played in society by Burton, Speke, Grant, Du Chaillu, and Kirk, and realised that these highly celebrated "travellers" were not thus admired, distinguished, and rewarded for their great learning, but rather for their manly character, their personal courage and spirit of enterprise, I began to understand the eminently practical bent of the British nation, and the problem was explained how this little Albion had attained to so

great power, so great riches, and boasts possessions which encircle the entire globe. Indeed the traveller in England enjoys much more notoriety than ever the greatest scholar and artist does on the Continent. He has seen distant lands and continents and knows where the best and the cheapest raw materials are to be had, and where the industrial products of the Mother Country can be sold most advantageously. He clears the way for the missionary and the trader and, in their wake, for the red-coat ; and just as in past ages the thirst for discovery as manifested by a Drake, a Raleigh, and a Cook materially contributed to the greatness of England, so now it is expected that the explorer's zeal and love of adventure will help to expand the country's political and commercial spheres of interest.

A cursory glance at England's latest acquisitions in the most diverse portions of the globe justifies this national point of view. At the time of my visit to London I met Mr. Stewart, the bold explorer of the Steppes of Australia, physically a perfect wreck on account of the great fatigues he had sustained ; but he was lionised tremendously. Australia at that time counted scarcely a million inhabitants, and now the number of Englishmen settled there has risen to four or five millions. The number of explorers, missionaries, and colonists has steadily increased, and this Colony, which is almost independent of the Mother Country,

now plays a very important part in the British Empire. The same may be expected of Africa. From the beginning of the sixties the African travels of Livingstone, and later on those of Du Chaillu, Burton, Speke, Grant, Baker, &c., were looked upon as great national events, the consequences of which would affect not only politics and commerce, but also ordinary workmen and artisans. And now, after scarce half a century, the British flag waves over the most diverse and by far the best parts of the Dark Continent. Railways run across the borderlands; in the Soudan, Uganda, Bulawayo and other lands, Western culture in British garb is making its way; and during the late South African War the whole nation, including its Colonies, manifested as much zeal and patriotism for the establishment of British power in Africa as if it concerned the defence of London or Birmingham. When we estimate at its right value this profound national interest in the exploration of foreign lands, we cannot be so very much surprised at England's political greatness, nor at the degree of attention paid to travellers. The English saying, "Trade follows the flag," can hardly be called correct, for first of all comes the explorer, then the missionary, then the merchant, and lastly comes the flag.

Of course my travels did not warrant any such expectations. The chief point of interest of these lay in the information which I brought from

Khiva, Bokhara, and Herat, and more especially with regard to the secret movements of Russia towards South Asia, so far unknown in England because of the total isolation of Central Asia. In political circles curiosity in this respect had reached a high pitch, for wild and undefined rumours were afloat about the Northern Colossus advancing towards the Yaxartes. My appearance was therefore of political importance, and when I add to this the interest created by the manner in which I had travelled—I mean my Dervish incognito, which amused the sensation-loving English people just as my proficiency in different European languages and Asiatic idioms provoked their curiosity—my brilliant reception is to a certain extent explained. The rapid change of scene during the early part of my sojourn in London quite stunned me; I lived in a world altogether new and hitherto undreamed of. For many days I had quite a struggle to adopt not merely European but English manners and customs. The contrast between the free-and-easy life of Asiatic lands—where in the way of food, clothes, and general behaviour, only such restraint is required as one chooses to lay upon oneself—and the rigid rules of society life to which in England one is expected to conform, was often painful and disagreeable to me. One gets sometimes into the most uncomfortable and ridiculous predicaments, and Livingstone was right when he once said to me, “Oh, how happy was my life in Africa; how

beautiful is the freedom amidst naked barbarism as compared with the tyrannical etiquette of our refined society !”

Thoughts of this kind came to me also sometimes ; I even longed often for the unfettered life and the ever-varying vicissitudes of my wanderings, but these were merely the result of momentary depression. The contrast between the highest and the lowest stage of civilisation had quite a different effect upon me, for in my inmost mind I clung to the medium stage of culture of my native land ; the home where, in spite of the mortifications inflicted upon me, I hoped one day to find a quieter haven of refuge than in the noisy, restless centre of Western activity.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

REC'D MLD

NOV 17 1960

REC'D LU-URL



JAN 7 1974

JUL 1974



AA 000 746 195 7

DS8
V25A2
1904
v.1

